The Form of Selfhood: Elegy and Self-Presentation in Early Modern England

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Introduction: A Worthless Genre

Haec ego mente olim laeva, studioque supino,
Nequitiae posui vana trophaea meae.
These trifles are the empty monuments of my idleness that I
set down, at one time, with silly reason and negligent fire.
—John Milton's Epigraph to his *Elegiarum Liber*, ll. 1-2

The lines above conclude John Milton's book of elegies as they are published in his 1645 *Poems*. Whether this epigraph's opening lines refer to only the preceding poem ("*Elegia Septima*") or the entire collection is a topic of contention; however, the reference to Milton's subject of his *nequitia* stands out for several reasons. Milton uses the word with some contempt and is actually asserting his dutiful reformation of morals since his youth, but the word is one that the Roman love elegists Propertius and Ovid embrace in their own collections.[1] In the opening poem of his second book of *Amores*, for example, Ovid declares himself to be "*nequitiae Naso poeta meae,*" "Naso, the poet of my wantonness" (*Amores* 2.1.2). Propertius likewise uses the word in his poem to Tullus, who invites him along on a journey for glory through arms (*Prop*. 1.6). Propertius rejects the honorable path for love, requesting from Tullus: "*me sine, quem semper voluit fortuna iacere, / huic animam extremam reddere nequitiae,*" "Give leave to me, whom fortune has always desired to lie in ruins, to surrender my dying breath to this worthlessness" (1.6.25-26). Even in the 9 extant lines of Gallus, the earliest of the Roman elegists, we find the word, seemingly attributed to his beloved Lycoris.[2] *Nequitiae*, in its prominence, is intricately entangled with the definition of elegy. It denotes, as my

[1] For a sense of how often the term is used, who uses it, and for what purposes, see Propertius 1.6.26, 1.15.38, 2.5.2, 2.6.30, 2.24.6, 3.10.24, 3.19.10. Ovid *Amores* 2.1.2, 3.1.17, 3.4.10, 3.11.37, 3.14.17; *Ars Amatoria* 2.392; *Heroides* 4.17, 17.29; *Fasti* 1.414; *Tristia* 2.280.
[2] See Edward Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993): *Nequitia … a Lycori tua* (fr. 2.1).

translations so far have shown, a variety of meanings, including idleness, wantonness, and worthlessness. It can reflect the elegists' embrace of *otium* (idle leisure) over *officium* (duty), their preference for love over anything else, and their apathy toward modern values. Indeed, "value" is what is at stake in these examples, which declare the genre's worthlessness and request that the reader decide whether these poems do indeed have any value.

In Roman elegy, one frequent *topos* in which the question of "worth" is raised is the *recusatio* or the refusal to write in a higher genre, especially epic. *Prop*. 1.6, for example, engages with this issue when contrasting the soldier with the lover. This contrast between the soldier and lover is no far cry from the contrast of the poet of war and the poet of love, the subject of the subsequent elegy, *Prop*. 1.7. The idea in such poems is that the epic poet justifies his literary activity by performing some act of civic duty by writing about politics or history, especially in early imperial Rome when epic material had much to do with issues of nationhood and sovereignty. To some extent, the epic poet could be seen as engaging in a form of civic *officium* or at least *otium negotiosum* (a busy, justified sort of leisure). In elegiac *recusationes*, however, the poet usually rejects a request or opportunity to compose epic in order to continue writing elegies and pursuing love, whose subject (especially in contrast with epic) appears to be rather trivial. This contention between epic and elegiac utility is the subject of the first chapter of this dissertation, where I suggest a reason for the polemic's prominence; however, this contention exists today too in literary scholarship. With all our attempts to disrupt notions of generic hierarchy and concepts of the canon, epic still maintains that privilege over elegy, and in studies of classical reception—the appropriation and

adaptation of ancient Greek and Roman texts—scholars still favor the politics of epic over all that elegy offers, at least as it pertains to early modern England.[3] We might consider the multitude of books on the reception of Virgil's *Aeneid* and his other hexameter verse poems (the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*)[4] or the special attention to Ovid's only epic, the *Metamorphoses*, over his numerous elegiac collections: the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Heroides*, *Fasti*, *Tristia*, and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*.[5] Yet, early modern writers knew many of these texts just as well as they knew Virgil's *Aeneid* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and a modern scholar can be justified in wondering how many Renaissance writers actually read the *Aeneid* from cover to cover without hesitating to assume their close familiarity with, for example, the *Heroides.* In this dissertation, I want to challenge modern understandings of elegy's role in the classical world and, especially, early modern England.[6] Following Tibullus', Propertius', and Ovid's lead, as they

[3] For representative books on the reception of epic, see David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*: *Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Patrick Cheney, *Spenser's Famous Flight: A Renaissance Idea of a Literary Career* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: From Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

[4] For representative books on the reception of Virgil in this period, see Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, *Jonson, Shakespeare and Early Modern Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); John Watkins, *The Specter of Dido: Spenser and Virgilian Epic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995). For the *Eclogues*, see Annabel M. Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*: *Virgil to Valery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Helen Cooper, *Pastoral: Mediaeval into Renaissance* (Ipswich: Brewer, 1977). For the *Georgics*, see J. Chalker, *The English Georgic: A Study in the Development of Form* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1969); Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Several other scholars are worth mention here for their work on reception, though they do not directly address the period, including Craig W. Kallendorf's works on Virgil, and the works of Thomas K. Hubbard, E. Kegel-Brinkgreve, and Thomas G. Rosenmeyer on pastoral.

[5] Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1986); R. J. DuRocher, *Milton and Ovid: Paradise Lost and the Metamorphoses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); K. L. McKinley, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine: 'Metamorphoses' Commentaries, 1100-1618* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[6] Studies on the reception of elegy is relatively scattered. For a book-length study of Ovid's love elegies, see M. L. Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence: Ovid's Amores from Antiquity to Shakespeare* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) and for a study of Catullus see Julia Haig Gaisser, *Catullus and his Renaissance Readers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Barbara Boyd gives some attention to reception in

asserted the utility of elegy over epic, I argue that while writers and scholars trumpeted epic as a genre of nationhood and empire, schoolmasters, students, and poets silently transform elegy into a preeminent form of selfhood, which is to say that elegy plays a principal role in disciplining, constituting, and interrogating selfhood in early modern England.

Elegy, I should clarify, was not the genre of funeral lament with which we associate it today, although this meaning did become more popular in the late 16th century. Rather, elegy (in Augustan Rome) was a genre of love poetry written in the first-person from the perspective of the poet. Its defining feature, if one can ever assert a defining feature for a genre, was its meter: the elegiac couplet. The canon of elegists (as they declare them and as they are received) include Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, and their poems were often directed to a particular beloved, a *puella* (i.e., girl, girlfriend, sweetheart), but were sometimes directed to male friends, rivals, or patrons too. Through these relationships, the elegists present themselves in a sort of counter-cultural manner, though they never truly challenge the status quo. They embrace ideals of leisure, wantonness, femininity, and servitude to women; yet in doing so they also affirm

Ovid's Literary Loves (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 203-224; and Cheney discusses the reception of Ovid's career in *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). Much of the scholarship on the reception of Roman elegy is in article form, cited in the chapters that follow, although some surveys are especially useful. See Gordon Braden, "Classical Love Elegy in the Renaissance (and after)," *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy*, ed. Karen Weisman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and "Love Poems in Sequence: The *Amores* from Petrarch to Goethe," *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid*, ed. John F. Miller and Carole E. Newlands (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014); *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, ed. Thea S. Thorsen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), especially Victoria Moul, "English Elegies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century," 306-319; Simona Gavinelli, "The Reception of Propertius in Late Antiquity and Neolatin and Renaissance Literature," *Brill's Companion to Propertius*, ed. Hans-Christian Gunther (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Francis White Weitzmann, "Notes on the Elizabethan Elegie," *PMLA* 50.2 (1935): 435-443. Although an early piece of scholarship, this work remains one of the more important and extensive surveys of English elegy. See also John Carey, "The Ovidian Love Elegy in England," PhD diss., Oxford University, 1960.

conventions of civic duty, marriage, and masculinity, and their servitude and femininity is often revealed to be a manipulative pose, having never actually forfeited their privilege in the relationship. As I explain in the first chapter, one of the aims of the elegists (with first-person poetry often addressed to actual contemporaries) was a sense of realism. Indeed, ancient and modern readers have understood their poems to be biographical; however, these poems are also richly metapoetic. Readers frequently have to approach them, as Alison Keith does, with an eye toward their double nature. Cynthia, who is Propertius' *puella*, may present, at once, a real woman (perhaps a pseudonym for Hostia) and an embodiment of his poetry (as a cognate for the god of poetry's epithet, Cynthian Apollo). These traits, so far, belong to what we now call "love" elegy; however, this term is a modern invention. Augustan writers would have recognized a similar elegiac tradition but "*elegia*" actually denoted a broader conception of the genre indebted to Hellenistic elegists, who wrote on myths and history and whose subjective mode was less prominent. Indeed, readers after Ovid also would have understood elegy more broadly, following his and Propertius' return to Hellenistic themes and experiments with the epistolary form.

By Ovid's death, Roman elegy appears quite broad and complex with its several authors, many collections, copious poems, and scattered themes, spanning from Catullus' erotic epigrams to Ovid's exile poetry.[7] This variety impacts the genre's reception immensely, making it difficult to trace. The continuity of epic that David Quint and Thomas Greene marvel at, though with a multiplicity of models and subversive

[7] For a brief survey of the reception of elegy after Ovid, see the appendix, "Elegy's Reception from Augustan Rome to Early Modern England."

possibilities, is absent for elegy.[8] Elegy has so many models and considerably more variety that it posed both a problem and an opportunity for the genre's imitators. Whereas elegiac imitation becomes remarkably flexible, elegiac definition becomes remarkably difficult. Between Augustan Rome and Elizabethan England, all of the traditions remain unified broadly under the name of "elegy" but gravitate loosely around its amorous predecessors. Julius Caesar Scaliger's essay *Poetices*, for example, identifies the centrality of love as well as elegy's flexible nature:

> Elegy ought to be candid, tender, terse, transparent, and so to speak, generous; concerned with emotions and exquisite phrases; not obscured by far-fetched stories. Cultivated, neat, rather than overly groomed. Contents: commemoration of the day love began, praise or cursing of same; quarrel, expostulation, prayer, vow, thanksgiving, exaltation; narration of furtive action, crying, altercation, complaint about sin or crime, taking it all back; explanation of one's life; comparison of oneself with one's rival; threat; threat of another girlfriend, complaint to door, doorkeeper, maid, mother, husband, weather, heaven itself; complaint to Cupid, Venus, oneself; hope for death, exile; hatred for absence of girlfriend. Further, desperation with curses, such as are found in [Ovid's] *Ibis* (if for different reasons). Also: Funeral odes, epitaphs, and letters are properly composed in this type of poetry.[9]

After reproducing the stylistic terminology used by the elegists and Quintilian (candid, tender, terse, cultivated, etc.), Scaliger slips in among amatory *topoi* "exile" and an appendix of "funeral odes, epitaphs, and letters," which recall the *Tristia*, *Heroides*, and Propertius' fourth book. Yet, when he describes the content of elegy, most *topoi* relate chiefly to love: the day it began, praise or curse of love, complaints to love's deities. Likewise, in late 16th-century England, when elegy sees its major revival, George Puttenham describes the elegists as "an other sort [of poets], who sought the fauor of faire

[8] See David Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 8; Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven*.
[9] Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices Libri Septem* 3.126 (Lyon, 1561). I borrow this translation from Luke B. T. Houghton, "Renaissance Latin love elegy," *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, 290-305.

Ladies, and coueted to bemone their estates at large, & the perplexities of loue in a certain pitious verse called *Elegie*, and thence were called *Eligiack*: such among the Latines were Ouid, Tibullus, & Propertius."[10] Elegy, in early modern England, is understood as a unified but flexible genre of complaint, whose primary theme is love but, as Francis White Weitzman shows, the term "elegy" now can refer to epistles and funeral poems as well.[11] The "space" that, for example, Jeri Debrohun finds in Propertius' Book 4, where aetiological elegy and love elegy productively meet, exists too in early modern England, which is to say that elegy becomes a space where authors can place the values of different elegiac traditions in productive tension, especially for self-presentation.

The simultaneous unity and flexibility of early modern elegy is demonstrated well by Barnabe Barnes and John Milton, whose elegiac collections draw from a variety of traditions. Milton, whom I discuss in Chapter 4, does not shy away from including love elegies among funeral elegies and exile elegies. He draws from Propertius and Ovid, from the *Fasti* and the *Tristia*. Likewise, Barnes' "Elegie ix," for example, combines erotic elegy with exilic elegy to create a tempered and sincere love poem. In this poem, the poet-lover asks Cupid and Venus for relief, begging that they take his life so that he would no longer suffer from hope and fear. The prayer to a deity is a fairly conventional rhetorical situation for love elegy;[12] however, Barnes takes an exile poem, *Tristia* 5.2 as his model, a prayer in which the poet asks for Jove (Augustus Caesar) to change the

[10] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 115, Book 1, Chapter 11.
[11] Weitzmann, "Notes on the Elizabethan Elegie," 435-443.
[12] In the Roman elegists' collections, prayers to deities can be found in several poems, whether as entire poems (*Prop*. 2.28 and 3.17), integrated pieces, or direct addresses to Cupid himself (*Amores* 2.9, which also is a request for relief).

location of his exile.[13] "*Parce, precor, minimamque tuo de fulmine partem / deme*," Ovid begs, "spare me, I pray you, and take away the least part of your thunderbolt" (5.2.53-54). Barnes too asks to be spared but equates Joves' fearful thunderbolt with Love's fire: "Oh spare me, … / Take hence the least brand of your extreme fiers" (ll. 11-12). Barnes reformulates the absence of the exile as the poet-lover's mortal relation to Cupid and Venus, humbly introducing a condition in both cases that recognizes his mortality. Thus, although these authors conceive of elegy as one genre, it proves to be extremely flexible with a variety of traditions, a feature that English poets take advantage of.

During this period, the *Heroides* and *Tristia* featured prominently in English humanist curricula, a subject that I discuss further in my second chapter. The goal of such an education was to produce a person, a gentleman with rhetorical facility and the intention to benefit the commonwealth, and en route to this destination, Ovid's elegies (and occasionally even Tibullus' and Propertius')[14] prefaced students' transitions to civic,

[13] Barnes follows its structure and framework quite closely, even translating certain lines. Both poems, for example, begin by invoking the prayer's recipient, emphasizing the distance between speaker and recipient, and humbling the poet before the recipient. Ovid, *Tristia - Ex Ponto*, trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 217: "*Adloquor en absens absentia numina supplex, / si fas est homini cum Iove posse loqui*," "Oh, I, an absent suppliant, address an absent divinity, if it is lawful for a mortal to be able to speak with Jove [Augustus]." Compare with Barnes' "With humble suite vpon my bended knee, / (Though absent farre from hence not to be seene) / Yet in thy power still present as goddes bee / I speake these wordes, whose bleeding woundes be greene, / To thee drad Cupid, and thy mother Queene: / If it at any time hath lawfull beene, / Men Mortall to speake with a dietie." Barnabe Barnes, "Elegie ix," *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, ed. Victor Doyno (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), ll. 1-7.

[14] For the (rare) use of Propertius and Tibullus in curricula, see Thomas Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine & lesse Greeke*, 2 vols, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1944), vol. 1, 354. Milton seemingly suggests all 3 of the canonical poets were part of his education. See Milton's "Apology for a Pamphlet [Smectymnuus]," *Complete Prose Works*, 8 vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe, Robert W. Ayers, and Maurice Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-1982), vol. 1, 862-953, 889-890: "I had my time, readers, as others have who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places where, the opinion was, it might be soonest attained; and as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended. Whereof some were grave orators and historians, whose matter methought I loved indeed, but as my age then was, so I understood them; others were the smooth elegiac poets, where of the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation

moral, and rhetorical instruction (along with symbolic and biological transitions into *adulescentia*). Their reading of these poems, usually the students' first Latin poems, marked the initial stage in oratorical education and introduced them to the importance of rhetoric and self-presentation. Elegy modelled both verse and epistolary composition and was the prime example for *ethopoeia*, character creation, which had its relevance for creating their own *persona* for letters. Furthermore, in these works, students observed Ovid's own self-presentation. Especially in his *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto* (but also in his *Amores* or *Ars* which so many students read anyway in their complete works of Ovid), readers could follow Ovid's life: his amorous youth, his rise as a poet after abandoning law school, and finally his decline in exile. As we'll see in the following chapters, for so many young men on the threshold of independence—at grammar school, at the Inns of Court, and at university—elegy's facility for self-presentation appealed to them. Furthermore, in these different contexts, a poet's choice of elegy—of its traditions, models, and *topoi*—provided a flexible means for self-presentation, which could position them in relation to libertine courtiers, exilic outcasts, or patriotic antiquarians. The genre made such an impact on English students that in England, unlike in France or Italy, elegiac compositions were composed in the vernacular as much or more than in neo-Latin.

Elegy's facility for self-presentation becomes especially important during this period when questions of subjectivity and individualist mentalities manifest conspicuously, although this historical moment is not the first to exhibit such

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I found most easy and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome."

consciousness.[15] Scholars such as Jonathan Dollimore, Catherine Belsey, and Stephen Greenblatt find in the period a noticeable doubt in humankind's essential nature and anthropocentric models of physical and metaphysical being.[16] They assert a growing doubt in the idea of a central self, a dawning recognition that the human subject actually consists of a series of selves or self-presentations. Since then, Terry Sherwood has challenged these authors' "secularized orientation" by reminding us that early modern England was a religious culture, which is to say that such issues were examined and analyzed through the language of religion. Sherwood's main point is that protestant vocation and Christian civic humanism provided stability in the face of growing concerns of subjective discontinuity, that they balanced and preserved the possibility of a unified self.[17] That being said, this early modern interest in subjectivity may very well have been spurred on by theories such as Copernicus' that challenged anthropocentric views of the cosmos, but the humanist movement itself also encouraged a sort of identity crisis, as Jacob Blevins argues. So much of the Renaissance, such as nationhood, authorship, arts, and philosophy, depended on antiquity to define itself, despite the fact that the classical

[15] Many studies have justly resisted the notion that the Renaissance is the origin for modern individualism. See, for example, Lee Patterson, "On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History and Medieval Studies," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 87-108.

[16] The basis for conceptions of the self can be found in Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985); John Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). See also Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) and Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[17] Terry G. Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007), 48-9; Sherwood echoes John Jeffries Martin's re-conceptualization of Renaissance selfhood (chiefly) in Italy by balancing modern and post-modern notions of identity and tempering genealogical studies of selfhood. The idea is that, in the Renaissance, selfhood is not only about an active and willful agent but also the relation between inner experience and society/culture. See Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 15-16.

world could never truly be revived, acquired, or attained in all its glory. As Blevins argues, the models that were "integral to humanist identity formation" were "temporally and ideologically foreign," which creates a critical difference in the humanist individual's self-conception and its relation to cultural symbolization systems.[18] It's a crisis that resembles Rome's desires for republican restoration while Julius Caesar and Augustus were fashioning an empire from its ashes—the very same crisis that, as Paul Allen Miller argues, made elegy so popular in the first century BC.[19]

Such a crisis in the Renaissance explains why writers in turned to lyric, especially the sonnet,[20] to examine continuities of the poet's consciousness and to drama, especially tragedy,[21] to interrogate boundaries between the internal and external self. Elegy combines the aspects that make these genres useful for inspecting subjectivity. Moreover, its position in English education—how it was used to craft and model *personae*, to discipline subjectivity—predisposes its use for self-presentation. Elegy's first-person mode makes it so apt a genre in this crisis and for English education.[22] Its presentation of the poet's self combines the composition of literary character and one's own identity, a

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[18] Jacob Blevins, *Humanism and Classical Crisis: Anxiety, Intertexts, and the Miltonic Memory* (Columbus: Ohio State, 2014), 10. Blevins turns here, as do so many writers on the elegists to Lacan, speaking generally about the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

[19] See Paul Allen Miller, *Subjecting Verses: Latin Erotic Elegy and the Emergence of the Real* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). Cited by Blevins too when discussing the Renaissance classical crisis, *Humanism and Classical Crisis*, 87.

[20] See, for example, Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Paul Oppenheimer, *The Birth of the Modern Mind*: *Self, Consciousness, and the Invention of the Sonnet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[21] See, for example, Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), as well as Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy*, and Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy*.

[22] Building on Miller, Micaela Janan turns to Lacanian theory to investigate elegiac subjectivity. She focuses more specifically on Propertius and his disjunctive fourth book, which she argues evidences the dissipation of an ideologically secure sense of self. Micaela Janan, *The Politics of Desire: Propertius IV* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

process shaped by contending historical forces. It is, as Stephen Greenblatt famously called it, a "self-fashioning" with no distinction between literature and reality.[23] Of course, other genres have a facility for self-presentation as well, especially the sonnet and other first-person lyric poetry. As I argue in Chapter 3, in addition to formal features such as length, elegy's mode distinguishes it from what we now characterize as the modern lyric mode, in which the "I" of the poem, who is frequently out of space and time, utters thoughts while alone. Elegy, in contrast, is a spoken or written mode that more frequently addresses another person, perhaps persuading or complaining to them in response to an implied situation. Why this matters is that the lyric self provides unique insight into an inner state whereas elegy, especially in Ovid's *Amores*, presents a dynamic relationship between the inner and the outer dimensions of self. Thus, in elegies such as *Amores* 2.7, Ovid fools the reader into believing that his statement of fidelity is sincere (i.e., his statement appears congruous with his inner feelings) when in *Amores* 2.8 he reveals that he has actually been cheating on his mistress with the maid. Moreover, the elegists, especially Ovid, are renowned for their juxtaposition of poems in which the "I"s possess contrasting attitudes, unified within a collection, so that our diachronic and synchronic readings produce not only an overarching narrative but also test the unity of the self or, perhaps, the substance of the self.[24] Indeed, Jeri Debrohun identifies how the Roman

[23] These are the words of Stephen Greenblatt describing the now commonplace term of Renaissance "self-fashioning," but his theory is especially relevant, indeed latent, in Miller's argument regarding the genesis of Roman elegy as a form of self-presentation and self-fashioning. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 3.

[24] See Richard Lanham's use of Ovid as the prime example for the "*homo rhetoricus*," the rhetorical man as cultivated by humanist education in in the Renaissance. See Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Eloquence in the Renaissance*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), 26. See also Maggie Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), (2), which contrasts this idea of Ovid with that of Milton's supposedly "monumentally unified self." As Kilgour herself notes, the idea of Ovid's fragmentary self is found as early as Hermann Fränkel's description of

elegists, drawing on Callimachus, present a "bipolar system": each elegist represents "a lover rent by various dichotomies."[25]

So far, I have tried to identify elegy's first-person mode as a means for the poet's self-presentation by highlighting the lack of distinction between the literary and social self, both of which we might call a *persona*. In early modern England, the term "*persona*" and the closely related "person" could denote an individual human, a social role, and a literary character.[26] As Terry Sherwood notes, these terms' prominence and their range of definitions prove more appropriate for discussing early modern subjectivity than the usual modern vocabulary ("self," "subject," and "identity").[27] Furthermore, it is the crafting of *personae (ethopoeia*) and the presentation of their own epistolary *personae* that elegy models in early modern English education. In the early modern use of these terms, we can understand how conceptions of the term *persona* have developed in modern psychology to mean "the individual's system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world,"[28] both a social self and a fiction, which is created by not only the individual but also the collective.[29] Likewise, in both Rome and England, elegists consider their audiences and try anticipating how their self-presentations will be understood by them, as we will see in the chapters that follow.

"the phenomena of insecure and fleeting identity, of a self divided in itself or spilling over into another self." See Fränkel, *Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 99.

[25] Jeri B. Debrohun, *Roman Propertius and the Reinvention of Elegy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 25. Janan, *The Politics of Desire*, 3.

[26] The OED's primary definitions denote "person" as "I. A role taken by a person" and "II. An individual human being; a man, woman, or child." Similarly, Lewis and Short define the Latin *persona* as "a personage, character, or part" and "a human being… a person."

[27] Terry Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern Literature*, 46-8.

[28] C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, ed. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 20 vols. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953-91), vol. 9.1, 122.

[29] C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vol. 7, 143.

I opened this introduction by raising the question of worth in relation to genre and suggesting the relevance of this question for Roman elegy, early modern English elegy, and contemporary scholarship. In particular, I phrased this question of worth as one between epic and elegy. The Roman elegists' original contention between epic and elegy fades by the time that early modern English authors begin to popularly imitate elegy. However, as I discuss in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, the two genres' relative worth remains at stake, and they retain contrasting utility and values. At the start of the sixteenth century, when England declared its separation from the church and turns itself into its own sovereign state, parliament announces England as its own empire. However, with declaration of English nationhood came demands on English identity, and English authors set out to define the state through legal writing, travel writing, chorography, histories, and maps.[30] In the same century, the likes of Erasmus and John Collett institutionalize classical humanism in England. Imitation of these classical works and, moreover, composition in English functioned as part of a national justification that looked back upon the Roman empire. The need for this national justification, tied to England's poetic production, led to an increasing pressure and ambition to compose epic. Indeed, humanist curricula made students' reading of epic their culminating achievement, a genre intended to instruct them both morally and politically. Its form became a means by which authors could connect or even interrogate their state in relation to Virgil and the

[30] I refer, in particular, to Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), whose title I adapt for this project.

Roman empire.[31] Most famously, Edmund Spenser established England's origins with the Romans and does so in the English language.

At the same time that epic serves as a form of nationhood, however, Christopher Marlowe translates Ovid's elegies, and the likes of John Donne, Ben Jonson, John Milton, Thomas Campion, Thomas Lodge, and Barnabe Barnes compose love elegies in various forms. Many of these authors are the rebellious "amateur" poets identified by Richard Helgerson in contrast with the poet laureate, and we ought to consider elegy's role in their fashioning of an amateur career. But these authors also find a special utility in elegy that goes beyond creating an amateur status. Whereas epic was the culminating form of their rhetorical education, elegy was their initiating form, one that provided a model of self and self-presentation, one that proved useful at various thresholds in their life: in grammar school, at the Inns of Court, at university, at the outset of a poetical career. Youth, as is often remarked during this period, is the appropriate time to compose elegy, a time when identities are in transition and humankind refines their self-conceptions, their conscious notions of who they are. Elegy, a first-person genre of social exchange, becomes a unique site wherein students can craft their own personal identities in relation to both poetics and politics. Whereas epic disciplined students in civic duty and provided poets a means to constitute and interrogate national identity, elegy disciplined students in creating *personae* and provided poets a uniquely flexible means to constitute and interrogate personal identity. Epic becomes the poetic form of nationhood *par excellence*, but elegy becomes the form of selfhood.

[31] See Quint, *Epic and Empire* and Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil*: *'Pessimistic' Readings of the* Aeneid *in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

The following chapters develop ideas of how elegy was used to discipline understandings of the early modern self and, moreover, how authors adapted its facility for self-presentation to create or interrogate *personae* at various thresholds of their lives. As a study of elegy, this dissertation extends scholarship on Ovid in early modern England, particularly the works of Leonard Barkan, Jonathan Bate, and Lynn Enterline.[32] Barkan and Bate demonstrate the influx of interest in Ovid's imaginative power at the same time that a new historical self-awareness burgeons in the sixteenth century and disrupts the tradition of allegorical and moralizing interpretation of Ovid's poems. The result is a burgeoning eroticism, the "wholesale sexualization" of 1590s Elizabethan culture, as Georgia Brown puts it, and the increasing popularity of Ovid as a model for an authorial career.[33] Following Enterline, who examines the internalization of Ovid in the Renaissance classroom, where students are disciplined in rhetoric, emotion, and gender through Ovid, I investigate how Ovidian models of self-presentation are disciplined and institutionalized in English education. Moreover, I follow Maggie Kilgour's lead to account for multiple Ovids, the plurality of Ovidianism, deriving from Ovid's numerous works and the variety of socio-literary contexts in which they were read.[34] I broaden this scope, however, beyond Ovid to Propertius and Tibullus. As Stella Revard finds with both Milton and Donne, their understanding of love poetry, Ovid, and elegy depend on their understanding of the other elegists, though read less frequently.[35] In its focus on

[32] Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis & the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); and Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
[33] Georgia Brown, *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[34] See Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid*.
[35] Stella Revard, *Milton and the Tangles of Neaera's Hair: the Making of the 1645 Poems* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997) and "Donne and Propertius: Love and Death in London and Rome," in

genre and its historical reception, this study is indebted to David Quint, who demonstrates the role of the epic genre in both constituting and interrogating nationhood and empire, as well as Richard Helgerson and Patrick Cheney, who examine the role of genre within a literary system to structure authorial careers.

By focusing on elegy over epic, I also reexamine perceptions of the early modern literary canon. Indeed, elegiac *recusationes* almost beg us to do so. As I have stated previously, studies of classical reception typically foreground Virgilian genres (pastoral, georgic, and epic) when charting classical influence in early modern England, and even with Ovid, the argument (for quite some time) fixated on his *Metamorphoses* and its anti-Virgilian role.[36] As a genre, epic, especially, has been prioritized as a vehicle for constituting and interrogating early modern conceptions of nation and empire; however, the emphasis of Virgilian influence and laureate ambitions in the mature phases of authors' lives neglects the importance of elegy in their youth. It often obscures what young readers, both then and now, are initially attracted to: elegy's erotic-persuasive utility, irreverent humor, and dramatic nature. As Erasmus and other early modern educators suggest, these poems attract young readers such as Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton, who go on to use elegy to fashion identities around love, friendship, and education. Furthermore, elegy's facility for self-presentation reveals early literary and professional ambitions by which we can revise our conceptions of poets' early

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The Eagle and the Dove: Reassessing John Donne, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 69-79.

[36] See Patrick Cheney, *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession*; Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire*, Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). In Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, see Syrithe Pugh, *Spenser and Ovid* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005) and Theresa Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

reputations. Shakespeare's use of elegy in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* addresses Ovidian self-presentation skeptically at a time when he is presenting himself as an Ovidian poet-playwright; Donne's elegies reveal his struggles with the self in the face of paradox; and Milton's elegies show his conflict between work and play as a young man with the ambitious desire to be a serious poet.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, entitled "Elegy, Not Epic: Generic Polemic and Self-Presentation in Rome," I consider how Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid define their elegies in relation to epic and identify their growing interest in the individual and subjectivity. In poems by each canonical elegist, I show how they use epic conventions—including subject matter, length, craftmanship, aesthetic, and narrative—to establish conventions of a relatively new form of elegy, one now focused on love with an expanded subject position of the poet. In *Amores* 1.1, for example, Ovid compares the subject position of the epic *vates* with that of the elegiac *poeta* to show the former's subordinate role within a larger narrative. The elegiac subject position, which Ovid is forced into by Cupid, becomes key in the subsequent transformation of Ovid's body and character. Elegy, Ovid reveals in this poem, has metamorphic powers, granted to it by its subjective mode. In the *recusationes* that fill Propertius' second book and in *Tibullus* 1.1, I show how they too define elegy's value as a genre for constituting and interrogating subjectivity in its concern for personal affairs, its attention to "realism," and its interpersonal mode.

The second chapter of this dissertation reconsiders Shakespeare's esteem of Ovid. "Shakespeare, the Ovidian Poet: Disciplining Self-Presentation in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*" argues that in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (ca. 1593) Shakespeare reveals a

growing ambivalence toward Ovid, an ambivalence which manifests more clearly in the late 1590s. In this play Shakespeare reflects on Ovid's elegiac paradigm for fashioning young male subjectivity as it was presented to him in his grammar school education. Likewise, as youths finishing their education and transitioning into adulthood, Proteus and Valentine apply their classics-based education to create masculine identities for themselves around relationships of love and friendship. As conflicts in these relationships arise, Proteus and Valentine follow and re-enact Ovid's *persona* in the *Amores* and *Tristia*. For example, Valentine's brief stint as "love's tutor" (*praeceptor amoris*) and pursuit of the Duke's daughter, result in his exile, just as Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and supposed pursuit of Augustus' daughter Julia lead to Ovid's own exile. Elegy provides the means and models by which these characters construct themselves, and in the final scene, Shakespeare expresses moral ambivalence toward Ovid's elegies in the neglect and abuse of the protagonists' mistresses.

The third chapter of this dissertation, "Donne, the Sincere Poet: Interrogating Selfhood in John Donne's *Elegies*," revisits Donne's renowned sincerity as a poet, indebted particularly to his *Songs and Sonnets*. I argue that Donne is actually anxious about the concept of sincerity as he comes to grip with emerging ideas of a de-centered, fragmented self. In several of his elegies, Donne searches for new ways to seem sincere while investigating the dimensions of subjectivity. Particularly in "On his Mistris" and "The Autumnall" Donne experiments with a dichotomy between Petrarchan sincerity and Ovidian cynicism. In "On his Mistris," for example, Donne depicts a young lover persuading his beloved to remain home when he departs. Donne initially presents a seemingly sincere Petrarchan speaker but then undermines this sincerity with Ovidian

cynicism, raising questions about the speaker's motivations for departure. At the heart of Donne's exploration is the elegiac form, whose "dramatic" conventions contrast with Petrarchan lyricism and allow Donne to posit a paradoxical sense of self, simultaneously unified and divided.

Finally, in "Milton, The Grave Poet: Exile from Idleness in the *Elegiarum Liber*" I examine how Milton, in his 1645 *Poems*, makes sense of his own contradictions in self-presentation as he collects and organizes poems from different genres, on different subjects, and from different times. In elegy, I argue, Milton finds a way to make sense of this self-division, especially as it manifests around ideas of duty (*officium*) and leisure (*otium*). Reorganizing his book of elegies within this collection, Milton emphasizes his self-presentation as an Ovidian exile, fashioned around dislocation of self, place, and language. In his *Elegia Prima*, for example, Milton describes his exile from Cambridge to London, where various attractions for a young male await him. However, recognizing their role in Ovid's own downfall, Milton banishes himself back to Cambridge to avoid amatory temptations and continue his education. He makes similar rhetorical maneuvers in *Elegia Sexta* and *Elegia Septima*, which contradict the recent biographical depictions of the young Milton's affability. Indeed, this image resonates through the 1645 collection as he confronts the *otium* of youth and pastoral while looking forward to the civic *officium* that epic holds in store.

Chapter 1: Elegy, Not Epic

Generic Polemic and Self-Presentation in Rome

Famously, when Ovid suffers banishment for his "*carmen et error*" ("a song and a sin"), his lengthy defense features the disclaimer, "*uita uerecunda est, musa iocosa mea*," "my life was modest, though my muse was merry."[37] In these lines, Ovid attempts to distinguish between his poetic *persona* and personal conception, suggesting a collapse between what he perceived as separate identities. His poetic *persona*, he laments, was conflated with his personal one, which dictated how others perceived him and advanced his exile. Ovid's *Tristia* thus serve as poems to grieve, repent, and, furthermore, redeem himself. These poems famously recycle the conventions of love elegy from his *Amores* for more modest ends by replacing the sought-after *puella*, for example, with his *patria*, Rome. Perhaps most of all, Ovid now focuses on presenting a new *persona*. He regrets having previously written about his youth (ll. 7-8) and, in *Tristia* 4.10, he even writes an elegiac autobiography, an attempt at re-presenting his self-image. Ovid's strategy works, to some extent. The *accessus* or introductions that eventually grace his elegies in medieval and early modern commentaries base much of their biographical information on these elegies, as well as those that precede it. Even in the present, scholars regard elegies as documentation of Ovid's life, as well as Propertius' and Tibullus'.[38]

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[37] Ovid, *Tristia - Ex Ponto*, 70 & 80, Book II, ll. 207 & 354.

[38] Belief, for example, that these elegies presented moments in the elegists' actual lives dates back to antiquity, e.g. Apuleius' *Apology*, which declares that the names of these mistresses were pseudonyms for historical women. For insightful metacritical commentary on biographical readings, see Alison Keith, *Propertius*: *Poet of Love and Leisure* (London: Duckworth, 2008), 88ff. The 19th century was a hotbed for biographical criticism, which extends for example into E. H. Haight, *Romance in the Latin Elegiac Poets* (New York: Longman, 1932), 81-124. The 1980's and 90's revived the question of "reality" in elegy. For its reality, see especially R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Latin Love Poets: From Catullus to Horace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). For its fiction and discourse analysis of elegy, see Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

In the *Tristia*, perhaps more overtly than in other elegiac collections, Ovid seeks to constitute an image of himself. But Roman elegy's Greek predecessors, even Hellenistic elegies, were less concerned with the self than Ovid is in his elegies. They were more concerned with myth and history, and the poet spoke only in framing passages. Tibullus' and Propertius' quickly defined early Roman elegies around a central theme, love, but already, behind this theme, another focus lingered, one that has led some scholars to describe elegy's interest in love as "superficial": the character of the poet.[39] So how did the genre, in the early elegies and especially by the *Tristia*, become so fixated on the self and identity? How did Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid transform elegy to set it upon this trajectory? The absence of all but 9 lines of Gallus' elegies (considered the first love elegies in Rome) hinders our understanding, yet I argue that one element of Roman elegy, which persists in almost every collection, supplies a partial answer: elegy's competition with epic. Elegy defined itself frequently in relation to other genres, most prominently with epic, so the elegists' attempts to craft the genre around self-presentation ought to be apparent in this polemic. In this chapter, I argue that the elegists use this generic polemic not to suggest the elegists' stance as either pro- or anti-Augustan (as so many have debated before) but rather to define the genre around and explore issues relating to subjectivity in Rome at a time when cultural values and the roles of the equestrian class were changing rapidly.[40] In opposition to epic, a genre of narrative and

[39] Barbara Boyd, for example, in discussing the *Amores* remarks that they are only "superficially about love," that "the theme of poetry writing and the character of the poet" are the true themes of this collection. See Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 133. A similar recognition has taken place in scholarship on the sonnet in Renaissance. See, for example, Catherine Bates, "The love sonnet in early modern England," in *Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet*, ed. A. D. Cousins and Peter Howarth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[40] The elegists, especially Propertius, write not only as Augustus' political critic but also as an ally, and even the more rebellious poetry, we might note, doesn't actually challenge the status quo — something we

nationhood, the elegists shape elegy into a genre of selfhood and subjectivity. And in the elegists' *recusationes* (their refusals to write epic), one can trace how the elegists' concern with subjectivity shifts from personal affairs, to elegy's useful interpersonal mode, and finally to its transformative powers—the ability to fashion a subject.

One of the great questions that Roman elegy has prompted over the years is how its nature, its short subjective poems, developed from the narrative fragments of archaic and Hellenistic Greek elegy. What's left of archaic elegy appears relatively "amorphous," "limitless," and "without rules."[41] They contain a variety of subjects and contexts for poetry in elegiac couplets. Archilochus', Callinus', and Tyrtaeus' elegies take martial themes; Solon's take political and patriotic ones; and Theognis' writes social commentary. As early as the Hellenistic *Leontion*, Hermesianax attempts to establishe a sort of proto-canon for elegy that positions his poem in relation to other writers who felt the pangs of love and, especially, 3 previous elegiac poets: Mimnermus, Antimachus, and Philitas. He frames each of these poets are as poet-lovers devoted to a specific woman and suggests love as a proper subject for elegy.[42] The question that concerned late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century critics about these elegies is whether they

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see with erotic poetry in seventeenth-century England as well. For a representative example of Propertius as a critic of Augustus see Hans-Peter Stahl, *Propertius: "Love" and "War": Individual and State Under Augustus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), especially 147. For Propertius as an Augustan ally, see John Kevin Newman, *Augustan Propertius: The Recapitulation of a Genre* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1997), especially 6. For critique of the pro- / anti-Augustan dichotomy see Duncan Kennedy, "'Augustan' and 'Anti-Augustan': Reflections on Terms of Reference," in *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*, ed. A. Powell (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992).

[41] I borrow each of these adjectives from Kevin Newman and Richard Thomas, respectively. My point differs from Newman's in that he sees the new context coaxing out a particular dimension: satire. See Kevin Newman, "The Third Book: Defining a Poetic Self," in *Brill's Companion to Propertius*, ed. Hans Gunther, Boston: Brill, 2006, 350. See also Richard Thomas, "Propertius and Propertian Elegy's Epigram Riffs," in *Latin Elegy and Hellenistic Epigram: A Tale of Two Genres at Rome*, ed. Alison Keith (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 67-85.

[42] See Joseph Farrell, "Calling out the Greeks: Dynamics of the Elegiac Canon," *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 11-24.

were "subjective" or "objective" and whether there existed any precedent for subjective *love* elegy.[43] Theognis, at the very least, spoke subjectively about erotic themes, and (likely but not certainly) Mimnermus wrote about his love for Nanno. Based on this evidence, Francis Cairns suggests that Hellenistic elegy (Antimachus, Philitas, and Hermesianax) also contained subjective love elegy. Philitas, whom the Roman elegists list within their elegiac canons, appears to be their primary model for subjective love elegy; however, the first-person mode in Philitas' and the other Hellenistic elegists' poems were restricted to only its frames and link passages, which were ultimately subordinated to stories of myth and history. If this is the case, one of Gallus' and the Roman elegists' greatest innovations appears the expansion of the subjective mode of elegy, as well as its division into discrete poems, now about love, unified within a collection.

The other Hellenistic elegist that the Romans cite among their canon is Callimachus, who serves more generally as a model for style and aesthetics.[44] Callimachus, too, wrote subjective elegy in the *Aetia*, though he also subordinated subjective moments to framing and linking passages in the first-person. What he is best known for, however, is his polemic regarding poetics. In particular, his remarks on poetic form in the *Aetia*'s preface, "Against the Telchines," criticizes harsh (i.e., unrefined) "long" poetry in contrast with short, polished poetry. Likewise, in Callimachus' "Hymn to Apollo," Apollo declares that the Assyrian streams may be great but they also carry

[43] Francis Cairns, *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 214ff.
[44] For Propertius' poetics, specifically, and the elegists' poetics more generally, see Alison Keith, *Propertius*: *Poet of Love and Leisure*, 45-85. See also Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 15-30, especially 28.

filth, whereas the trickling waters of the Melissae remain pure. Elsewhere Callimachus goes so far as to criticize Mimnermus' Nanno, the name of both the mistress and the book of poetry, for being "fat" or large. Thus, from Callimachus' *Aetia*, Philitas and Hellenistic elegies, and Catullus' Lesbia poems, the Roman elegists craft refined and discrete, subjective poems on love, borrowing along the way from, especially, epigram and comedy.[45] The Romans expanded the elements of subjectivity from the Hellenistic elegists from framing and linking passages to the entire poem, replacing the centrality of mythic narratives with their own speeches and letters—with "reality." As Callimachus advocated for, they write short, refined poems that follow especially the models of erotic epigrams, Catullus, Calvus, and Varro in their discrete poems and their subjective treatment of love. The question remains, what prompted them to transform elegy in this way?

Certainly, one motivating factor for expanding elegy's subjective mode was the increasing disjunction between individual conceptions of self and cultural ideology. As Paul Allen Miller argues, the Roman elegists and those of a similar class struggle to relate to shifting ideologies under Julius Caesar and Augustus. The result is a identity crisis. Before the rise of Caesar and Augustus, as the republican constitution deteriorated and military and political power shifted to various factions, a desire manifested among citizens and political agents to preserve tradition and restore the republic.[46] Both Julius

[45] See Alison Keith, *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, 45-51 and *Latin Elegy and Hellenistic Epigram: A Tale of Two Genres at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011); Archibald Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938); Georg Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1969); Niklas Holzberg, *Die römische Liebeselegie. Eine Einführung*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999); Paul Allen Miller, "Catullus and Roman Love Elegy," in M. B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

[46] Erich S Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 155-6. Gruen explains, for example, how "a solitary figure [Pompey] was named to the

Caesar and Augustus promised this restoration, while paradoxically establishing a new identity out of its ruins. Augustus established himself as protector of traditional morality, a guardian of republican values; however, he simultaneously collected political and military power for himself, limiting the political mobility (and devotion) among the senatorial class. A desire for private pursuits grew in the place of civic duty, and from this emerged Roman elegy. Although it was not culturally sanctioned, this desire had been germinating for some time, sprouting even in the late republic. Cicero, for example, describes Romans who choose idle *otium* (leisure) over civic *officium* (duty) in his *De Officiis*.[47] Relevant to these private pursuits is an increased concern with erotic dimensions of tradition. In the late republic, Rome begins to shift away from regulated sexuality based on principles of honor and shame, and the growing concern with this shift manifests in the many literary representations of figures like Clodia and Sempronia.[48] When Augustus begins his moral and religious reform, these concerns with sexuality were at the forefront of his project. He enacts legislation such as the 18 B.C. marriage law as a means to repopulate a Roman political society that the long-lasting in-fighting and civil wars had depleted. Out of these ideological shifts a crisis of personal identity develops. As Miller argues, the Roman male subject's sense of self grows distant from

consulship—a virtual contradiction in terms"; however, he argues that "Pompey was chosen to restore the city to health and normality" (155). It was "a suspension of constitutional practices to meet a crisis" and was done to preserve the Republican institution (154). See also, Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 17.

[47] Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 73, 1.21.71. For a more extensive explication of this passage in relation to elegiac attitudes, see Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 18. See also, the fourth chapter of this dissertation, which examines John Milton's interest in elegy's rejection of *officium*.

[48] Maria Wyke, "The Elegiac Woman at Rome," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 33 (1987): 153-78. For the relation of elegiac women to "real" women, see also Wyke, "Reading Female Flesh: *Amores* 3.1," in Cameron Averil (ed.) *History as Text: The Writing of Ancient History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); and Wyke, "Written Women: Propertius' *Scripta Puella*," *JRS* 77 (1987): 47-51.

cultural codification; Augustan ideology and its signifying practices prove insufficient for self-presentation. In reaction to this crisis, the elegists craft elegy into a genre of subjectivity, into a genre by which they can re-formulate their identity and probe the nature of subjectivity.

As the elegists sought to represent personal affairs and reject civic duty, they reformed the Callimachean poetical polemic between short and long poetry into one between epic and elegy,[49] borrowing chiefly from bucolic *recusationes* in Bion and *Eclogue* 6.[50] Accompanying Augustus' attempts to establish continuity between the burgeoning imperialism and the yearned-for republican values was the need to legitimize his reign. Not surprisingly, during this period there was an influx of epic: Homer's genre of Odyssean wanderings and Iliadic warfare, heroic deeds and narrative, Apollonius' genre of romance and *aetia*.[51] Ennius had already used epic to relate the rise of Rome, but Virgil now steps forth, cementing epic as a form of nationhood. He uses the genre to interrogate imperial ideology and its political foundation from within Augustus' own party, but he also uses it to link Augustus' reign to Rome's Trojan founder Aeneas, transform civil war into a conquest of the East, and trumpet Augustus' self-proclaimed

[49] On the Augustan elegists mobilize these statements to place elegy in opposition to epic. See Alan Cameron, "Genre and Style in Callimachus," *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 122 (1992): 305-312, especially 308; Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 454-484. For Roman interpretation of Callimachean polemic see Richard Hunter, *The Shadow of Callimachus: Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 34-40.

[50] Cameron argues the influence of *Eclogue* 6 and Bion, the bucolic poet from Smyrna. See Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics*, 456 and 471. Although I agree with Cameron's assessment of Callimachean influence on the tradition of *recusationes*, I disagree with his later and simplified analysis of how Propertius and the elegists employ it in their poetry.

[51] It has become somewhat commonplace that there was a vogue for epic at this time, but for a brief survey of epic from Ennius to the elegists, see Peter White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 78-82. In the late Republic and early empire, White counts nearly 2 dozen historical epics (without panegyric aims), though few survive.

virtues of *pietas* and *clementia*.[52] The epic form thus functioned as more than just a structure. It played a role, and would continue to do so, in constituting and even interrogating national identity and culture.[53] The elegists' rejection of civic duty, then, not only resembles but also explicitly becomes a rejection (though not necessarily a criticism) of epic's national role, and the elegists' focus on personal affairs becomes a defining value of elegy.

I argue in this chapter that, as epic becomes a genre of nationhood, the elegists, through the epic/elegy polemic, fashion their genre into a form of selfhood. The elegists usually engage in this polemic, as I have been characterizing it, through the *topos* of *recusatio*, which becomes especially relevant in first-century (BC) Rome. The general idea of a *recusatio* is an apology or defense of writing in a low style or genre.[54] This *topos* may be an effort to convey the author's modesty; however, under Augustus when authors commonly mixed genres and challenged generic hierarchies, it could also function ironically. "Comic" genres, in *recusationes* and elsewhere, frequently challenge their subordinate rank to their more serious, superior genres. Regardless, *recusationes* make for complicated exchanges in that they inevitably affirm the generic hierarchies they reject or may desire to subvert: before asserting their preference for a comic genre, they acknowledge the superiority of, for example, tragedy. Among *recusationes*, the conflict between epic and elegy—the "epic/elegy polemic" as Paolo Fedeli calls it—is of

[52] See David Quint, "Epic and the Winners," *Epic and Empire*, 19-96.
[53] See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 6; Helgerson uses historical formalist methodology to investigate the agency of form.
[54] See Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics*, 455: the *recusatio* is "in its simplest form … an apology by an author of erotic, sympotic or bucolic poetry for not writing in a higher style, in effect a variation on the affected modesty topos."

special prominence,[55] due likely to the Callimachean polemic's similarity and the current cultural context of Rome. Scholarship on Tibullus', Propertius', and Ovid's elegies has been a hotbed for diverse issues, especially politics, patronage, and gender, and each of these issues arise prominently in these elegy/epic *recusationes*. However, the elegists use these *recusationes* especially to define elegy's conventions and values in relation to and often in opposition to qualities of epic, and as I argue in this chapter these *recusationes* have a special purpose: to assert the genre's subjective mode as a means for articulating the self.

Tibullus, whose engagement with epic may be the earliest examples we have of the elegists, confronts epic more implicitly than his counterparts, relying on an assumed relationship between an author's character and their poetry. In antiquity, it was thought that an author's choice of or facility for composing a genre conveyed something about his or her character. This concept dates back to Plato and Aristotle who conflate one's choice of life with one's choice of poetry. Generally, poets were thought to write in genres suitable to their person. In the *Republic*, Plato remarks that authors will compose in genres proper to their character. Comedians, he says, cannot write both comedy and tragedy. Similarly, Aristotle suggests that the genesis of genre has to do with character, that it results from serious poets representing serious subjects.[56] In Rome, these ideas

[55] See Paolo Fedeli, "Elegy and Literary Polemic in Propertius'*Monobiblos*," *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar*, vol. 3 (Trowbridge, Wiltshire: Redwood Burn Limited, 1981).

[56] Plato, *The Republic*, vol. 1, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 233, 394e-395b: "Since, unless I mistake, the same men cannot practise well at once even the two forms of imitation that appear most nearly akin, as the writing of tragedy and comedy?" See also Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 39, 1448b24-7: "Poetry branched into two, according to its creators' characters: the more serious produced mimesis of noble actions and the actions of noble people, while the more vulgar depicted the actions of the base, in the first place by composing invectives." For its relation to classical genre theories, see Joseph Farrell, "Classical Genre in Theory and in Practice," *New Literary History* 34, no. 3 (2003): 383-408, especially 384.

work in conjunction with another discourse that conflates the poet's body with poetry.[57] An author's *corpus*, for example, denotes not only his/her physical body but his/her figurative "body" of works, and a *membra* denotes not only a "limb" but a section of an oratory or work. In the first-person, these are fairly basic figures that the Roman elegists expand upon with terminology of Callimachean style: since elegy must be *tenuis* (slender or delicate, λεπτός), so must the elegist's body. This relationship between poet and genre is significant culturally too as it crafts and professes a system of values. Merely the choice of genre is a declaration of the author's values. In elegy's expansion of its subjectivity, however, the relation between one's genre and self becomes especially important. Elegies simultaneously constitute an image of the poet and an image of the genre. Thus, when elegists engage in the epic-elegy polemic, they articulate both self and genre. Furthermore, when they speak of their *modus vitae*, their "way of life" (*Prop.* 1.7.9), or their *via*, their "path" (*Tib*. 1.1.26), they can also be speaking about their poetry. Each elegist relies to some extent on this relationship in their *recusationes*, though for Tibullus the concept is his central means for engaging with epic.

He even uses this concept—the relation between poetry and character—to engage with epic in the first poem of his first collection. Although so far I have mostly been referring to heroic narrative in dactylic hexameters, the term epic or *epos* can also denote the meter of pastoral poetry, and Tibullus' opening poem addresses both of these traditions, reflecting not only the recent "publication" of Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* but also the growing epic vogue. In this poem, Tibullus turns a σύγκρισις βίων (a

[57] See Alison "Slender Verse: Roman Elegy and Ancient Rhetorical Theory," *Mnemosyne* 52, no. 1 (1999): 41-62, especially 41.

comparison of lives) into a comparison of "epic" traditions.[58] While he literally recuses himself from a soldier's life in favor of a rustic's life, he figuratively recuses himself from heroic *epos* in favor of pastoral *epos*, a recusal that recalls the pastoral origins of *recusationes* in Bion and Virgil. He prefers pastoral, I argue, for its ability to address personal affairs; however, by the end of the poem he reveals his preference for elegiac realism in contrast with impossible fantasy of pastoral.[59] The result is a reversal of Virgil's own opening poem: whereas reality subtly intrudes upon the pastoral world in *Eclogue* 1, *Tib*. 1.1 features a modern, realistic poet who, in his rejection of labor and poetic ambition, faces the impossibility of pastoral fantasy. Furthermore, this modern poet whom Tibullus presents proves realistic in a way most characteristic of Tibullus, its fragmented, contingent subjectivity. In sum, Tibullus does not merely celebrate pastoral and reject epic, as he is typically thought to do, nor is Virgil merely a "spur" for Tibullus' imagination.[60] Rather, Tibullus defines elegy in relation to both epic and pastoral, rejecting epic *labor* (workmanship), undermining the supposed *inertia* (artlessness) of

[58] Unless noted otherwise, when I use the word "epic" in the remainder of this section, I refer not to the general idea of *epos* (i.e. the genre as defined by dactylic hexameter catalectic form) but rather to the heroic "subgenre" of epic with which the word is most often associated. Truly, this distinction is an important one at the basis of Tibullus' concern since he compares two traditions of *epos* in the poem, though he does so in elegiac form.

[59] For elegy's "reality effect," an assessment of scholarship on elegy's use of it, and how it works in Tibullus' elegies (as opposed to Propertius' and Ovid's elegies, which receive more attention in this regard), see Duncan Kennedy, *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy*, Roman Literature and its Contexts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-23, especially 3 and 15 ff. Interest in realism has much of its origins in Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 13-14. Finally, an essential gloss for Ovid's realism, which is much harder to nail down, can be found in Barbara Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 132-164, especially 133-135.

[60] Michael Putnam, "Virgil and Tibullus 1.1," *Classical Philology* 100, no. 2 (April 2005): 123-141, especially 140.

pastoral, and establishing as the realm of elegy the poet-subject, his/her consciousness and personal affairs, rather than narrative and civic duty.[61]

In the opening lines of the poem, Tibullus establishes a σύγκρισις βίων, a comparison of lives, between a rustic life of poverty and a military career of riches. Tibullus sets this up in the first six lines of the poem. "*Diuitias alius fuluo sibi congerat auro / … quem labor assiduus uicino terreat hoste, / … me mea paupertas uita traducat inerti*," he begins "Let another gather riches for himself in yellow gold, ... someone whom constant toil frightens with the nearby enemy. ... Let my poverty lead me to a life of inaction" (1.1-5).[62] In these lines, Tibullus contrasts the life of a soldier with that of a country rustic (*rusticus*), of which the former obtains riches (*diuitias*), whereas the latter finds poverty (*paupertas*). The reason for his preference, he implies, derives from the means by which *diuitias* and *paupertas* are maintained: "constant toil" ("*assiduus labor*") versus "a life of inaction" ("*uita inerti*"). Ironically, this rustic life of *inertia* is one marked by the tending of land and raising of livestock, pleasant for Tibullus but also a fantasy, denoted by the frequency of future tenses and subjunctives. Eventually, however, Tibullus moves from the descriptions of these lives into the language of epic and Callimachean poetics, suggesting a metapoetic dimension to this σύγκρισις βίων. Following his fantasy of rustic life, Tibullus remarks, "*Iam modo, iam possim contentus*

[61] Although somewhat less conducive to argumentation, the following analysis resembles a running commentary. I take this form because I think it is best suited for explaining the subtle developments in Tibullus' elegies. Such a form of analysis has plenty of precedents, derived especially from Reader Response theory, but also has precedent in scholarship on Tibullus. Cf. Parshia Lee-Stecum, *Powerplay in Tibullus: Reading* Elegies *Book One* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), which approaches the entire collection in this way.

[62] Subsequent references to Tibullus' elegies are taken from *Tibullus, Elegies*: *Text, Introduction and Commentary*, ARCA, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers, and Monographs 41, ed. Robert Maltby (Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2002). Translations are mine unless noted otherwise.

uiuere paruo / nec semper longae deditus esse uiae," "now and only now am I able to live content with a little, never to be surrendered to the long road of the soldier" (25-6). In this line "*deditus*" can signify devotion but also invokes its martial denotation, to be surrendered, which Tibullus coaxes out through "*longa uia*," a reference to the soldier's hardships in travel.[63] The contrast in these lines between *longa* and *paruo* recalls the Callimachean discourse that pits long against short,[64] and *uiae*, paths or roads, have functioned metonymically to signify "travel" and the process of poetic composition since archaic Greek epic, perhaps even in Indo-European times.[65] In his preface to the *Aetia*, for example, Callimachus uses the metaphor of a road or path (both "κέλευθος" and "οἶμος," l. 27) when discussing poetic composition. Later, Tibullus will even go so far as to point emphatically at the word *uia* for this reason, not only by its terminal position in the pentameter but by its repetition. When the poet once again rejects the *longa uia*, though now for its incompatibility with love, Tibullus emphatically puns on the term in three rhyming pentameters: "*pluuias*," "*uias*," "*exuuias*" (1.50, 52, 54). In this way, the reader may begin to suspect that Tibullus is rejecting not only a way of life but also a type of poetry. The poem itself is very much about *uiae*: not only *uiae uitae* but ultimately *uiae poesis*.

[63] Later, for example, Ovid will remark: "*militis officium longa est uia*," "the duty of the soldier is the long road" (Ovid, *Am.* 1.9.9), seemingly in reference to not only the soldier's journey in contrast with the lover's life but also the length of epic narrative in contrast with elegiac lament.
[64] Tibullus uses similar language in *Tib*. 2.5 and 2.6, though in *Tib*. 1.1 he compares the *via militis* and the *via rustici*. See Fineberg 141-142. In *Tib*. 2.5, for example, we find the foundation of Rome put into these terms when the Sibyl remarks to Aeneas that "Troia quidem tunc se mirabitur et sibi dicet / uos bene tam longa consuluisse uia." We likewise find it in *Tib*. 2.6, wherein Macer — likely the very epic poet that Ovid refers to in 2.18 — considers both a literary shift and a career shift away from tender Love.
[65] See Katharina Volk, *The Poetics of Latin Didactic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 20-24, whose focus is on *Georgics* 3.8-9. See also John Henkel, "Metrical Feet on the Road of Poetry: Foot Puns and Literary Polemic in Tibullus," *Classical World* 107, no. 4 (Summer 2014): 451-475.

Tibullus' invocation of genre and metapoetics in these lines draws attention to the metapoetic nature of the poem's central dichotomy: martial *labor* and rustic *inertia*. Critics have struggled with Tibullus' peculiar use of *labor* in these lines, especially due to its erroneous contrast with that of rustic life in this poem. As David Wray notes, "toil" makes sense in opposition to *iners* but contradicts the reality of rustic life, and indeed Tibullus' imagined life in the following couplet explicitly invokes the *labor* of rustic life.[66] Although Wray asserts a compelling metapoetic reading of *labor* to reconcile this paradox, the most convincing reading remains the simplest: *labor* does indeed denote "toil" and its contradictions are intentionally ironic. *Labor*, like "*longa uia*," invokes a literary-critical term, the Greek πόνος, which Callimachus and others use to signify "the toil which went into the writing of polished learned poetry."[67] Thus, *labor* stands metonymically as both a literary work and the literary toil or "workmanship" of an artist.[68] By rejecting martial *labor*, Tibullus rejects not the Hellenistic poetic aesthetic but its particular embodiment in epic poetry. After all, just as the soldier's life requires "perpetual toil" (*assiduus labor*), so does the epic poet's life require constant polishing of

[66] David Wray, "What Poets Do: Tibullus on 'Easy' Hands," *Classical Philology* 98, no. 3 (July 2003): 217-250, especially 222. "Hardship" makes some sense in this line but does not fit so well with *labor*'s obvious contrast with *iners*; in a military context a more obvious contrast would have been *timidus*. See also Cicero, *Fam*. 7.16.3, 17.1. Citing Julius Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*, Wray himself suggests that *labor* and *iners* function as "ethical attributes": masculine endurance/toughness and effeminate cowardice (226). However, when we return to Tibullus' line including *labor* and read it with this meaning, Wray's reading too falls flat. The coexistence of both *labor* and *iners* in the Caesar passage is impressive, as is its fit with elegiac conflicts regarding masculinity and femininity. These meanings give us a better sense of its polyvalence and the relation between the two words but they still cannot be reconciled as the primary senses of the words: "someone whom constant toughness puts in fear, with the enemies at close hand."
[67] Maltby, *Tibullus, Elegies*, 119. It also is in some sense the process by which a poem may achieve the descriptors *tersus* and/or *cultus*, qualities attributed to Tibullus' own works. See Cairns, *Tibullus*, 28-9.
[68] See Cicero, *De leg*. 1.8 for the use of *labor* to refer to a literary composition. See also *Georgics* 2.39. Most importantly, however, may be this line's connection to the opening lines of *Eclogue* 10, in which the figure of the poet actually speaks, moving beyond the perspectives of shepherds etc. and *simplicitas*, in reference to the poem and entire book as a *labor*.

such a long work. This assertion echoes Callimachus' remarks in his preface to the *Aetia*. "Short poems are sweeter," he says, "hereon, judge skill by craftsmanship [τέχνῃ], not the Persian chain [i.e., length]."[69] One of Callimachus' criticisms in these lines, though not necessarily anti-epic, is that long poems do not lend themselves to craftmanship as do short poems, which are consequently sweeter for it. Later in *Tib*. 1.1, when Tibullus reveals that he is speaking to the literary patron Messalla, the poetic analog between careers and genres, soldier and epic, farmer and pastoral, becomes more apparent. Thus, the thought of *assiduus labor* frightens away Tibullus from heroic epic.

Toward the end of the poem, Tibullus reveals that *labor* is not all that frightens him. Rather, he pursues comfort and security rather than soldierly wealth and glory. So far, he has moved from a rejection of wealth to a comparison of martial and rustic life. He then turns this comparison into a metapoetic discussion of epic and pastoral. He prefers the latter for its *paupertas* as opposed to *diuitias*, *inertia* as opposed to *labor*, and *paruo* as opposed to *longa*. He prefers it so long as his hearth (*focus*) is filled with ever-burning fire (*assiduo igne*, 1.6). If *assiduus labor* functions metapoetically, we might expect the same for its counterpart, *assiduo igne*. Rather than *labor* abroad, he prefers what is at home. *Focus* or hearth, then as now, could stand metonymically for one's home or possessions, and although he refers to a literal hearth, both his real and poetic passion (*ignis*) are his personal affairs. This focus becomes clear when Tibullus, in an abrupt shift as noted by the likes of Julia Haeg Gaisser, Eleanor Leach, and Barbara Boyd, abandons

[69] See Callimachus, *Aetia, Iambi, Hecale and Other Fragments*, ed. Thomas Gelzer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univeristy Press, 1978), 7: "ἀ[ηδονίδες] ᾽ ὧδε μελιχρότεραι / … αὖθι δὲ τέχνῃ / κρίνετε,] μὴ σχοίνῳ Περσίδι τὴν σοφίην." Translation mine.

his rustic fantasy in consideration of his mistress, Delia.[70] He shifts from the dichotomy of *militia* and *rura* to *militia* and *amor*. There is no explicit reason for this shift—as is common for Tibullus—, but the implicit motive behind this shift is significant. The shift begins when he mentions his "*dominam*" (ll. 46) for the first time, the *puella* who soon becomes the focus of the poem and the entire collection. He reveals in the subsequent address of his patron, this mistress has been a motivating priority throughout the poem:[71]

> *O quantum est auri pereat potiusque smaragdi*
> *quam fleat ob nostras ulla puella uias!*
> *te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique*
> *ut domus hostiles praeferat exuuias:*
> *me retinent uinctum formosae uincla puellae,*
> *et sedeo durias ianitor ante fores*. (1.51-56)
> O rather than any girl weep on account of our travels, let all the gold and every emerald perish! It is fitting for you, Messalla, to war on land and sea so that you may display enemy spoils, but the fetters of a shapely woman restrain me, who am conquered, and so I sit a guardian before her harsh doors.

It is for the benefit of his mistress, he reveals, that he shuns war and is tempted by the rustic life. His preference for *rura* is predicated by his preference for *amor*. At war, he will have abandoned her. In the rustic life, he may still hold her in his arms at night. That his mistress is the true reasoning behind his preference for *rusticitas* is affirmed by the remainder of the poem. "*Non ego laudari curo, mea Delia*," he says, giving his mistress' name for the first time, "*tecum / dum modo sim, quaeso segnis inersque uocer*," "I do not

[70] Tibullus' stream-of-consciousness manner makes for such shifts that initially appear abrupt and require the reader to search for a cause or motivation behind the transition. See Julia Haig Gaisser, "*Amor, Rura* and *Militia* in Three Elegies of Tibullus: 1.1, 1.5., 1.10," *Latomus* 42 (1983): 58-72; Eleanor Leach, "Poetics and Poetic Design in Tibullus' First Elegiac Book," *Arethusa* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 79-96; Barbara Boyd, "*Parua seges satis est*: The Landscape of Tibullan Elegy in 1.1 and 1.10," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 273-80; Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 107.

[71] Cf. Parshia Lee-Stecum, *Powerplay in Tibullus*, 45-49. Lee-Stecum too recognizes the shift here as underlying Tibullus' desire for one life over the other. Lee-Stecum is primarily interested in the poetic effect of this reveal but neglects its significance in the overall poem, favoring the unruly results of poetry and neglecting the significance of this as an intended maneuver by Tibullus.

care to be praised, my Delia. As long as I'm with you, I seek to be called lazy and inactive" (1.57-8). Tibullus revisits his concerns not only with war but with epic in these lines. The collocation of *iners*, *ignis*, and the conditional *dum* construction recall the pithy distich of lines 5 and 6 where the metapoetic discussion first began: "*me mea paupertas uitae traducat inerti / dum meus assiduo luceat igne focus*"; however, now the comfort of Tibullus' *focus* is replaced by Delia herself, asserting her primacy in his choice of life. He still seeks to be *iners* (inactive but also artless) and now *segnis*, literally "without fire" but also lazy and (poetically) unambitious.

Whereas the soldier's life of *labor* comes to represent epic, the rustic's life, that of *inertia*, invokes pastoral. He helps this along through allusions to Virgil's *Eclogues*.[72] In some regard, the association of a rustic life with *inertia* already invokes pastoral, calling to mind its *otium* or leisure; however, this leisure is not that of the golden age but ironically the idle and corrupting leisure of Augustan Rome.[73] Like *labor*, *iners* also relates to the concept of literary craftmanship. In fact, its denotation "unskilled" or "artless" is a common use of the word, from *in-ars*: a concealment of one's artifice. Relative to epic, pastoral is relatively less laborious, but Tibullus is also looking to conceal his artistry.[74] However, this artlessness and rustic *otium*, are ultimately false and

[72] Whereas Tibullus' ideal rustic life is constructed primarily by reference to the *Eclogues*, Tibullus primarily alludes to passages of the *Georgics* when setting the scene. The most convincing allusions to the *Georgics* are at the start and end of the poem, signifying an exit from the pastoral world and the realistic setting of elegy.

[73] See Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 68; Brian Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance: The Ambivalence of *Otium*," *Renaissance Studies* 4, no. 1-2 (June 1990): 1-37, 107-15; Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 101.

[74] This association with pastoral and *inertia* initially appears logical in comparison with epic, so much as the description of a rustic life as *iners* initially makes sense in comparison with war. The brevity of eclogues allows for less intimidating craftmanship; however, in particular, pastoral may appear *iners* for its hexameters on rustic themes, spoken by characters living in a landscape of "poetic play." Virgil, too, is interested in crafting an appearance of simplicity in his poetry that obscures the very art and precision that

fantastic, as Tibullus reveals through allusions to the *Eclogues*. Similar to Tibullus' distinction between his rustic fantasy and the present, Tibullus also emphasizes the distance of pastoral fantasy by placing allusions to the *Eclogues* within elegy's modern, realistic setting. This is ultimately a reversal of *Eclogue* 1, wherein Virgil depicts pastoral set in the golden age, giving way to reality in the form of war. Tibullus, in contrast, depicts pastoral as a fantasy in a post-golden age reality, wishing for it in the form of *rusticitas*.[75] For example, when Tibullus imagines how he would face one of the tasks of a rustic life, he invokes one of the signs that Melibeous' takes as the end of the golden age. Tibullus claims, "*non agnamue sinu pigeat fetumue capellae / desertum oblita matre referre domum*," "it would not bother me to carry back a lamb or the newborn of a goat, abandoned by a neglectful mother" (*Tib*. 1.31-32), recalling Melibeous' recent tragedy: "*hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellos, / spem gregis, a! silice in nuda conixa reliquit*," "for just now, here amid the crowded hazels, she [a *capella*] abandoned her twins, alas, the hope of the flock, having born them on the bare flint" (*Ecl*. 1.14-15).[76] In both cases, there is the risk of losing young ones, the "*spem gregis*"; however, for Tibullus this crisis is something he looks forward to. Just as Tibullus would not be

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he applies to his lofty hexameters. Likewise, the comparison between epic and pastoral is important in that they are both hexameter traditions, one of which is serious and self-conscious, the other which is playful and deceptively simple. As Tibullus alludes to the *Eclogues*, however, he invokes the actual craftmanship and artificiality of the poems, creating a double irony. Thus, just as *iners* becomes an ironic description for the rustic life and its true *labor*, Tibullus asserts the irony of pastoral *inertia*.

[75] Tibullus' emphasis of his *paupertas* in his prayer to the Lares, for example, joins two allusions to *Ecl*. 1 from a speech of Meliboeus. In the most pointed passage regarding the intrusion of reality on the pastoral landscape, Meliboeus laments that he may never see his country, home, crops, or flock again. Tibullus recycles this lamentation as material for his fantasy, combining Meliboeus' *pauperis tuguri* ("poor hut") and *felix quondam pecus* ("once fortunate flock") into his *felicis quondam nunc pauperis agri* ("once fortunate, now poor estate"). Tibullus creates an implicit comparison through this allusion: whereas Meliboeus laments the dissipation of the golden age in the loss of his means for existence, Tibullus looks back at it in hope, emphasizing its distance from the present.

[76] Subsequent references to the Eclogues are from *A Commentary on Virgil, Eclogues*, trans. Wendell Clausen (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1994). Translations are my own.

ashamed (*nec pudeat*) to use a hoe, he likewise would not be bothered (*nec pigeat*) to carry a lamb or kid (*Tib*. 1.29, 31). These subjunctives locate these actions in his imagination and likewise suggest the taboo nature of these rustic tasks for someone in Tibullus' position. In contrast, Meliboeus' similar task is a sign that "*undique totis / usque adeo turbatur agris*" (*Ecl*. 1.11-12), that there is a disturbance throughout the land, perpetual and from all sides: a marker of the golden age's dissolution. Tibullus' ridiculous desire plays up the pastoral fantasy "set in the countryside" yet "invariably produced by urban intellectuals who have never themselves handled a spade, much less herded sheep, goats, or cattle, in their lives."[77]

Tibullus' preference for pastoral over epic continues here, though he ultimately points to pastoral's impossibility in contrast with elegy's realism. If love is the subject of his poetry, certainly the martial world of epic is unsuitable. In many ways, this unsuitability anticipates the premise of Ovid's *Heroides*: the lamentations of women who were abandoned or mistreated by epic and tragic heroes. Pastoral is much more suitable for love. The preference here echoes Virgil's own riff on the subject matter with Gallus in *Eclogue* 10, who hopes to find relief and security in the pastoral landscape.[78] However, whereas Gallus' love lament proves unsuitable for the pastoral world in Virgil's *Ecl*. 10, Tibullus points to the impossibility of pastoral in the modern world. More than pastoral

[77] Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium*: *The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 233.

[78] Veyne sees *Eclogue* 10 as Virgil's recognition of elegiac and bucolic similarities, that it truly takes place outside the world. However, he downplays the "affected" quality of pastoral quality to make it better resemble elegy. See Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 102-104. See also, Michael Putnam, "Virgil and Tibullus 1.1"; Putnam, "Nine: *Eclogue* 10," *Virgil's Pastoral Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 342-394; and Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, ed. C. P. Segal (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 100-129; David O. Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy, and Rome*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 85-106.

or epic, elegy depicts the real, even if, as Veyne remarks, the elegists "refer to reality only to ballast it."[79] This moment in the poem serves as a sort of climax for several reasons. Tibullus reveals that it is for Delia that he has compared these careers and, in doing so, he affirms Gallan love elegy. This is to say that he has rejected epic and pointed up the impossibility of pastoral, all while in elegiac couplets and now, finally, affirms love and personal affairs as his subject matter.

This preference for personal affairs and for reality, however, manifests itself in another more subtle way, in his representation of himself and the self. Tibullus never identifies it directly but self-presentation is his chief concern throughout the poem and the collection. And Tibullus' approach to this self-presentation is his most characteristic of qualities. He, more so than any other Augustan poet, is reminiscent of the modernist poets in his polyphony. As W. R. Johnson writes, his poet-lover is infrequently unified, composed often of "a sheer discontinuum, fragmentations of self and work and love, multiple and mutually exacerbating conflicts."[80] In *Tib*. 1.1, as Tibullus sways between fantasy and reality, he attributes a *vita iners* to a life of labor, desires poverty so long as he is safe with a store of riches. The poem, too, revolves around "doubleness"; words, like *labor*, *inertia*, *facilis*, etc. frustrate the reader in their possible denotations and metapoetic meanings. Furthermore, as I have argued, the poem is simultaneously a comparison of lives and a comparison of genres. These contradictions and this doubleness persist throughout the first book too. In *Tib*. 1.1, as Miller points out, Tibullus' treatment of "wealth" differs from that in 1.4, 1.5, 1.9, and 1.10, a reflection of

[79] Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 13.
[80] W. R. Johnson, "Messalla's Birthday: The Politics of Pastoral," *Arethusa* 23 (1990): 93-113, especially 108.

the self's contingent nature. In *Tib*. 1.4 and 1.5, wealth is despised as a requirement for winning one's love or as a threat to the stability of a relationship. In *Tib*. 1.9, wealth is a way to win love but also to corrupt love and in 1.10 wealth is the cause of war and death. In contrast, in *Tib*. 1.1, wealth is rejected for its labor and for its distraction from Delia. These inconsistencies, the contradictions within and between poems, much less Tibullus' nearly stream-of-consciousness poetry mimics reality, even if he immediately belies or dispenses with it.[81] For Miller, these contradictions are, in Lacanian terms, symptoms of "the traumatic irruption of the 'Real' into the ordered realm of language and the Symbolic";[82] yet, this self-presentation, the representation of subjectivity, may also be Tibullus' interrogation of subjectivity during a widespread crisis of identity. His definition of elegy in contrast with pastoral and heroic epic as a genre of personal affairs and self-presentation allows him to do so.

In comparison with Propertius and Ovid, Tibullus' concern with pastoral appears relatively unique. The former are much more concerned with heroic and panegyric forms of *epos*. Propertius, whose first collection is published around the same time as Tibullus', may allude to the *Eclogues* in *Prop*. 1.18 but otherwise only directly addresses Virgil's *Eclogues* once in his second book. In this poem (*Prop*. 2.34), Propertius advises Lynceus (who writes learned and respected poetry, including epic) on the benefits of writing on love. The *Eclogues*, Propertius says, are proof that poets who take love as their subject have no less talent, only a lower style ("*ore*"), like a swan who stoops to the unlearned

[81] See Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 7.
[82] Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 96.

song ("*indocte carmine*") of a goose (2.34.83-4).[83] Propertius acknowledges pastoral as an appropriate genre for love but he also seems to smirk at its fantastic basis, remarking how luckily the shepherd can buy his love with cheap apples from his compliant ("*facilis*") beloved, rather than a hard-hearted ("*dura*") girlfriend.[84] The real point of this poem, however, is the use or value of elegy in relation to serious poetry, especially epic. As it is for Tibullus, elegy remains for Propertius a genre for confronting personal affairs rather than civic responsibilities. However, Propertius also begins to emphasize the practical use of elegy, whose subjective form, unlike epic's, can be used to persuade and seduce. Propertius defines elegy in contrast with epic by its interpersonal lyric mode. Through this mode, Propertius fashions a self, though he intentionally conveys a self whose articulation fits poorly with cultural values and interrogates the interstitial elements of subjectivity.[85] For the poem's addressees—for the readers—ironies await discovery, ironies that reveal the space from which Propertius' speaks, caught between epic and elegiac, masculine and feminine, dutiful and idle.

As in *Tib*. 1.1, Propertius prefers elegy to epic for its ability to address personal affairs, which contrast with epic's greater scope and purpose. In his first book, for example, Propertius twice addresses Ponticus, an epic poet composing a Thebaid, and

[83] Subsequent references to Propertius' works are from Paolo Fedeli (ed.), *Properzio, Elegie Libro IV* (Bari: Adriatic Editrice, 1965); *Sesto Properzio, Il primo libro delle elegie* (Florence: Leo S. Oschki Editore, 1980); *Properzio, Il libro terzo delle elegie* (Bari: Adriatic Editrice, 1985); *Properzio, Il libro secondo*, ARCA 45 (Cambridge: Francis Cairns Publications Ltd, 2005).
[84] For *Prop*. 2.34 as criticism of Virgil's poetry, especially pastoral, see Stahl, *Propertius*: "*Love*" *and* "*War*," 181.
[85] For this point, I am heavily indebted to Paul Allen Miller's argument in "Why Propertius is a Woman," *Subjecting Verses*, 130-159, which uses post-Lacanian feminist theory to analyze Propertius' femininity as a form of dissociation between the Symbolic and elegiac self-presentation.

asks him why he writes epic and why he scorns Propertius' poems.[86] The answer should be obvious. Whereas Ponticus writes on grave subjects, "*armaque fraternae tristia militiae*" or "sad arms and fraternal fighting," Propertius only pursues trifling ones, his "*amores*" (1.7.2, 5). Ironically, Propertius describes his mistress (*domina*) and his youth as *dura* or "harsh" (1.7.6), a term associated with epic verse, usually denoting its "vigorous," "severe," or, in a Tibullan sense, "uncultivated" qualities but also with connotations of masculinity.[87] Epic's spirited rhythm, martial subject, and toil, which goes into its lengthy verse make it a reasonably "harsh" genre. The story of Thebes and the seven armies (*septem agmina*) is certainly not "*mollis*" or soft. Nor is the story of Caesar's wars, the implied subject of a proposed epic in *Prop.* 2.1 to glorify Maecenas and Augustus. But for Propertius, love, especially, has the ability to make these matters lie deaf for eternity ("*in aeterno surda iacere situ*" 1.7.18), and this ability makes elegy's subject just as harsh as epic's. He even prophecies that Ponticus will one day understand Propertius' plight, that Ponticus, like the grave poet Lynceus in *Prop*. 2.34, will fare no safer than the epic poets Antimachus or Homer ("*tu non Antimacho, non tutior ibis Homero,*" 2.34.45), who supposedly fell in love with Lyde and Penelope. Propertius says that he himself has been compelled by love to write elegy: "I am confined (*cogor*) to serve not so much my talent (*ingenio*) as my pain (*dolori*), to complain of my harsh youth" (1.7.7-8). He may have enough talent to write epic, for its glory and wealth, but

[86] Although I disagree with Stahl's assessment of Propertius' politics, his reading of Propertius' *recusationes* 1.7 and 1.9 provide an excellent explication and analyses of these poem's contribution to the *recusatio* tradition. See, Stahl, "Love Elegy and 'Higher' Poetry (1.7 and 1.9), *Propertius*: *"Love" and "War,"* especially 57. See also Keith, *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, 118-119 for the homosocial context of these *recusationes* in the *Monobiblos.*

[87] Lewis and Short, definitions II.A.2 and II.A respectively. It also had connotations of masculinity and was used antithetically with *mollitas*. See Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 31 ff.

his feelings take precedent over the obligation of such talent to write epic verse. Once Ponticus falls in love, Propertius claims, he will finally understand the significance of his themes and recognize Propertius' art: "then you will admire me as a poet not insignificant (*non humilem*). Then will I be esteemed above the talents (*ingeniis*) of Rome" (1.7.21-22). The poet-lover takes love and his personal affairs as his subject but acknowledges that an epic poet may view them very differently. Propertius leaves behind Tibullus' (and Callimachus') attention to labor and length but likewise highlights, as Hans-Peter Stahl argues, its relevance "when his personal existence is at stake," "its human value, in times of need."[88]

Propertius also asserts that, not only are these themes as harsh as epic's, they also have utility as an interpersonal genre for persuasion and lament. In *Prop*. 1.7, Propertius feels forced to write each elegy not as celebration of his themes or his knowledge so much as something to use against a hard-hearted mistress (1.7.6). In *Prop*. 1.9, Ponticus has now fallen prey to love, and Propertius advises him. "*Quid tibi misero prodest grave dicere carmen / aut Amphioniae moene flere lyrae*," he asks, "What benefit is there for you, wretch, to declare a serious song or mourn the Theban walls built by Amphion's lyre?" (1.9.9-10). "*Plus in amore valet Mimnermi versus Homero*," Propertius suggests, "in love, the elegiac verse of Mimnermus would help more than Homer's epic" (1.9.11). Instead, Ponticus should "sing whatever his girlfriend wants to hear" (1.9.14) for he can use elegy to persuade her. Propertius emphasizes this utility of elegy in book 2, especially *Prop*. 2.34. He asks Lynceus repeatedly, "*quid … tibi prosunt*," what profit is there for you in these serious subjects?

[88] Stahl, *Propertius: "Love" and "War*," 57.

> *Quid tua Socraticis tibi nunc sapientia libris*
> *Proderit aut rerum dicere posse vias*?
> *Aut quid Aratei tibi prosunt carmina lecti*?
> . . . . . .
> *Non Amphiareae prosint tibi fata quadrigae*
> *Aut Capanei magno grata ruina Ioui*. (2.34.27-9, 39-40)
> "Now what will your knowledge from Socratic books profit you or the ability to relate how things work? What help are the songs of Aratus' couch? … The fate of Amphiaraus' horse won't benefit you, nor will Capaneus' ruin, which pleased great Jove."

If elegy can be used to persuade one's beloved, as Propertius claims, Lynceus would be better off writing elegy, not some work that describes obscure information. "No girl desires to discover the science of this world," Propertius' claims, "nor the reason that the Moon labors for her brother's steeds, nor whether anyone survives beyond the Stygian streams, nor whether lightning is aimed and thunders with purpose" (2.34.51-4). What will benefit Lynceus then? Propertius suggests, "*Tu satius Musam leviorem imitere Philitae / et non inflati somnia Callimachi*," "you would be more productive to imitate the lighter Muse of Philitas and the dream of Callimachus, who writes without pretension" (2.34.31-32). The subjects of Philitas and the style of Callimachus can help Lynceus persuade a *puella*. Elegy deals with personal matters, and its interpersonal mode—its ability to speak to the beloved—allows the poet to use the genre toward this end. Of course, the poet is not only (or perhaps ever) speaking to his *puella* (or a friend, or a *ianitor*, etc.). Rather, he is often actually speaking to the reader, trying to persuade or elicit sympathy from her or him through the rhetorical situation. For Propertius, elegy and its interpersonal mode is useful for presenting a self to the reader just as much as a hypothetical *puella*.

However, Propertius puts forth a self in these poems—the *recusationes* in which he emphasises elegy's interpersonal utility—that fits poorly within the values to which he subscribes (his acceptance of epic superiority) in the poem. Thus, Propertius' search for sympathy from the *puella* and reader is also a search for recognition or understanding of his identity crisis. In these *recusationes*, one of Propertius' most consistent means for framing himself and his relationships is through the language of epic, a feature that reveals the disjunction between self-image and cultural values. Thus, in *Prop*. 1.7, Propertius compares his *duram dominam* with the *durus versus* of epic (cf. 2.1.41). He replaces the inspiring muses of epic invocation with his *puella*: "neither Calliope nor Apollo sings these songs for me. My girlfriend excites my talent" (2.1.3-4). Propertius also, misogynistically, presents her as an object of his desire that he, as a sort of epic hero—a *militia amoris*—, attempts to conquer or win, an enemy but also a prize.[89] Epic warfare thus translates into sexual skirmishes: "her clothes snatched away, she wrestles with me naked; then truly I should sing long Iliads" (2.1.13-14). Propertius, as he frames it, "versifies battles on the narrow bed" (2.1.45). His conquest is complicated by competitors for Cynthia, romantic *rivales* and *hostes* such as Lynceus, whom Propertius compares to epic womanizers, Paris—"the adulterer guest who accepted Menelaus' hospitality"—and Jason—"the mysterious lover whom Medea followed" (2.34.7-8). Like the heroes and kings of epic, Propertius suggests, he may rule (*regnem*); however, he

[89] On the elegists devaluation of women as commodities (between lovers and "the literary marketplace), see Ellen Greene, *The Erotics of Domination: Male Desire and the Mistress in Latin Love Poetry* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). See especially her chapter on Propertius' insistence on the *puella*'s object status, 37-66. See also Keith, *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, 110 for the literal and figurative (as poetry book) circulation of Cynthia among male rivals and readers. Finally, see Leslie Cahoon, "The Bed as Battlefield: Erotic Conquest and Military Metaphor in Ovid's *Amores*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118 (1988): 293-307. The latter attends to domination in amatory relationships as a critique of Roman love.

rules through not warfare but poetic talent (*ingenio*) and his kingdom is actually a banquet among a crowd of girls (2.34.55-8). Propertius, as he himself claims, is unable to compose epic, both physically (2.1.39-42) and emotionally (1.7.7); yet, the genre sets a standard against which he is still viewed. He consciously presents himself in this way, aware that he is both inside and outside the system that promotes epic and civic *officium*.

These issues at the heart of Propertius' *recusationes* manifest frequently in his other poems as well; however, they all intersect in *Prop*. 2.9A especially, which purports to scold his *puella* for infidelity as a bid for her favor. Propertius once again inserts himself into the world of epic, though now instead of an explicit *recusatio*, Propertius implicitly reveals how he—an elegiac poet—fits poorly among epic's "*caedes*" and "*arma*," "carnage" and "weapons" (2.9A.18). In contrast with epic's protagonist, the hero of a narrative, Propertius identifies elegy's "hero" as a lyric subject who displays no *pietas* but rather wavers between modes of conduct. The poem begins vaguely with a comparison: "*iste quod est, ego saepe fui*," "what that man is, I often was" (2.9A.1). Propertius' beloved (unnamed but likely Cynthia) has chosen a new man. "Penelope," Propertius says, "was able to live for twenty years untarnished, a woman so worthy of her many suitors" and "although she never hoped to see Ulysses again, she remained respectful into her old age by waiting for him" (2.9A.4-5, 7-8). Likewise, Propertius says, Briseis held Achilles after his death. "Then," he remarks, "Greece delighted in its faithful wives [*veris nuptis*] … but you, faithless one, you cannot rest for one night or stay alone for one day" (2.9A.17, 19-20). In this introduction, Propertius compares his beloved to those of Ulysses and Achilles. He describes Cynthia, in contrast with Penelope and Briseis, as "*perfida*" and "*impia*," "faithless" and "without duty" (2.9A.20, 28), though he

personally has spent his years dutifully (*pios annos*, 2.9A.47). He continues to chide her for her faithlessness, attributing it in part to her sex, but he ends the elegy by submitting to her in an attempt to win her back. "I will be alone, if impossible to be yours," he says (2.9A.46). Of course, Propertius' comparison of Cynthia with Penelope and Briseis implies, in this analog, a comparison of himself with Ulysses and Achilles. Furthermore, his insistence that his time with her has been *pius*, faithful and dutiful, recalls that important trait of Aeneas. However, just as Cynthia is no Penelope or Briseis (and definitely no Dido), Propertius reveals, to both Cynthia and the reader, that he is a poor epic hero.

In fact, Cynthia resembles more the epic hero and Propertius the hero's *nupta* or wife. Ulysses wandered not only about the Mediterranean but also from Penelope's bed, and, if the reference to *pietas* is indeed a Virgilian allusion, *impia* Cynthia better recalls *pius* Aeneas' abandonment of Dido; what was *pius* in epic becomes both *impia* and *perfida* in elegy. In contrast, when asserting his fidelity, *pius* Propertius closely reproduces the acts that he attributes to the heroines. Propertius reminds Cynthia that, just as Briseis remained beside Achilles when he died, he made his own vows for Cynthia's health when "the Stygian streams had then seized [her] head and friends stood round [her] bed in tears" (2.9A.26-27). His final declaration in the poem, that he will wait faithfully for Cynthia, though she may not for him, transforms him into the patient Penelope, with whom he started the poem. Propertius' elegiac heroes are not Ulysses, Achilles, or Aeneas but Penelope, Briseis, and Dido. Thus, as he inverts the roles of epic,

Propertius also inverts the roles of gender.[90] Cynthia, who is the subject of Propertius' *mollis liber* (2.2.2) and who is the *dura* (harsh) mistress in *Prop*. 2.1, is more suitable for epic. At the heart of this inversion of genders and genres is Propertius' distinction between epic and elegiac modes: the narrative and the lyric. Amid the weapons and carnage of Homeric epic, Propertius admires not the heroes' battles or journies but the patience of their "wives." Like them, he assumes a (supposedly) passive role. As they delay (*differre*, 2.9A.5), endure (*remansit*, 2.9A.8), and lament (*maerens*, 2.9A.11), he prays (*precor*, 2.9A.38), wishes (*utinam*, 2.9A.47), and yields (*cedam*, 2.9A.37) to his *puella*. Furthermore, although Propertius compares himself with epic heroes of action and deeds, his entire poem is actually a complaint, directed at Cynthia—a subjective appeal that contrasts with Homer's narration of Achilles' and Ulysses' actions and Virgil's narration of Aeneas' *caedes* and *arma*. As Propertius remarks in his *recusationes*, elegy's lyric, interpersonal mode distinguishes it from epic and its narrative. But, Lynceus and Ponticus might ask, how does elegy prove useful here? Propertius would reply that, as a complaint, 2.9A has the potential to invoke his beloved's sympathy and persuade her to be faithful to him once more. Weapons and slaughter are unhelpful here.

Elegy's interpersonal mode, however, has 2 audiences, the addressee and the reader, and so much as elegy can elicit sympathy from the addressee, it can elicit sympathy from the reader as well. Propertius' readers, at the very least, are meant to find the ironies in his claim for epic masculinity, but the humor that these ironies generate is accompanied by a sense of tragedy in the recognition that Propertius can not measure up

[90] See Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 138; Nancy Wiggers, "Reconsideration of Propertius 2.1," *Classical Journal* 72 (1977): 334-341; and Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 32-33. See also Ellen Green's treatment of Catullus' masculine and feminine voices and inversion of gender roles in *The Erotics of Domination*, 1-36.

to the standards to which he subscribes. Just as Propertius accepts these expectations of masculinity, epic, and duty, he also, in a sense, challenges their validity by emphasizing, for example, the role of epic *pietas* in the abandonment of women and the fidelity of women despite the infidelity of husbands (in Penelope's case) or abduction and abuse (in Briseis' case). Propertius' simultaneous acceptance and rejection of these conventions, as Miller identifies, is an interrogation of subjectivity through elegy, an interrogation of his interstitial existence. As I argue, this interrogation relies on the very qualities of elegy that Propertius distinguishes in relation to epic, its interpersonal mode, in that the reader's/addressee's recognition that Propertius' speech does not align with reality. Truly what Propertius presents is this poem is his existence both inside and outside of a system that promotes civic and epic values of masculinity, and the striking result (despite the scant attention that *Prop*. 2.9A has received) is a tragic humor centered on Propertius' identity.

Thus, whereas Tibullus identifies elegy as a genre for personal affairs and realism, Propertius emphasizes its lyric and interpersonal modes as a means for self-presentation. In *Prop*. 2.9A, Propertius measures himself against standards of masculinity and epic that he simultaneously challenges. The resulting ironies are intentional, and through them Propertius interrogates paradoxical elements of subjectivity and presents a *persona* caught between conventions of epic and elegy and masculinity and femininity. In the final poem of this book, Propertius declares his desire for glory and reputation amid Rome's love poets, and indeed Propertius' peculiar relationship to epic, masculine, and civic conventions that we find in *Prop*. 2.9A and his *recusationes* lives on. In his third book, Propertius returns with more certainty in the reputation that elegy has secured for

him, though he now emphasizes a new element. Epic, he implies in the opening poem, is a genre for times of war and elegy for times of peace.[91] He expands on this claim in the book's first 5 elegies, declaring in *Prop*. 3.5 that the reason for war and epic is greed, a defect in man's reason when Prometheus first formed him. "*Corpora disponens mentem non vidit in arte*," says Propertius, "when forming the body, Prometheus neglected the mind in his craft" (3.5.9). Here, I believe, Propertius plants a seed that will bloom in the elegies of Ovid. Epic's neglect of the mind for the body—for action—will translate into elegy's attention to the mind, of lyric speech and thought, and Ovid's desire to master his *persona.*

Over 3 books, Propertius used elegy to build a reputation. Ovid, writing after both Tibullus and Propertius, takes this utility to create his own *persona* whose fiction (paradoxically) is what is most realistic about it. As he soon discovers, however, he has less control over this *persona* than he thought, when it takes on a life of its own in the minds of his readers.[92] In Ovid's collections of elegies that follow Propertius' first 3 books, each book begins with a *recusatio*, and in these poems Ovid identifies (more

[91] "O Rome," he says, "many will add new praises to your annals, singing of Bactra as the future limit of empire. But this work for you to read in time of peace has my page brought down by an untrodden path from the Sisters' mount." This distinction is also implied in both *Prop*. 3.3 and 3.4, poems which focus on epic's warfare and Caesar's war against rich India ("*Arma deus Caesar dites meditatur ad Indos*," 3.4.1) yet distinguish Propertius as a poet of peace, satisfied with love: "*praeda sit haec illis, quorum meruere labores: / mi sat erit Sacra plaudere posse Via*." "let this booty be theirs whose labor earned it. I am content in my ability to cheer them on the Sacred Way." In *Prop*. 3.5, Propertius fully conflates the peace/war and elegy/epic dichotomies. "*Pacis Amor deus est, pacem veneramur amantes*: / *sat mihi cum domina proelia dura mea*," Propertius writes, reversing the first and final lines of the previous poem, "Love is the god of peace; lovers worship peace. I am content with severe battles against my mistress." "*Nec tamen inviso pectus mihi carpitur auro, / nec bibit e gemma divite nostra sitis*," he continues, "not yet is my heart seized by [hateful] gold, nor [am I refreshed by jewelled goblets]." See Stahl, *Propertius: "Love" and "War*," 191.

[92] On Ovid's interest in subjectivity and readership, see also Richard Jackson King, *Desiring Rome: Male Subjectivity and Reading Ovid's* Fasti (Ohio State University Press, 2006). For insights that Ovid provides to modern psychology see Leah Tomkins, "The Myth of Narcissus: Ovid and the Problem of Subjectivity in Psychology," *Greece & Rome* 58(2), October 2011, 224-239.

explicitly than the other elegists) elegy's metamorphic power as its distinguishing feature: its ability to transform the poet. Ovid, whom Richard Lanham declares the preeminent *homo rhetoricus,* discovers this power in elegy and combines it with his rhetorical mastery to articulate and manipulate his *persona*.[93] Reflecting on both Tibullus' and Propertius' love elegies, Ovid develops a vexing *persona* with "separable identities," a lover whose conventional surface only thinly obscures the deceptive poet who peers out from within.[94] His *persona* is a "protean" or "Proteus-like" actor able to consciously "metamorphose" himself into traditional elegiac characters, given the circumstances.[95] Although this nature causes some scholars to characterize the *Amores* as a "move away from the illusion of subjective elegy,"[96] it actually creates a new and innovative sense of sincerity, one which recognizes the blurry boundaries between internal and external self and the rhetorical nature of humans.[97] However, as we'll see, Ovid grows anxious when his intentional ironies, *persona*, and (by extension) self-

[93] Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence*, 26.
[94] Cf. Ellen Greene, *The Erotics of Domination*, who views Ovid as "letting us 'see through' his manipulations and exploitations of women" to "shatter the fiction of the male narrator as enslaved and the female narrative subject as his enslaver" (67).
[95] For Ovid's "separable identities" as poet and lover, not just poet-lover, see Barbara Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 132-164, especially 139. See John T. Davis, *Fictus Adulter: Poet as Actor in the* Amores (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1989), especially 1-2. Ovid's best examples of "self-interested posturing" are *Am*. 2.7, 2.8, and 1.10. For Davis' analysis, see *Fictus Adulter*, 22-23. For Ovid's Proteus-like nature, see Davis, *Fictus Adulter*, 57ff. His *persona*, as he advises in the *Ars Amatoria*, resembles Proteus, for the man who is "*honestus*" is destined to fail in love. See Ovid, "The Art of Love: I," *The Art of Love and Other Poems*, trans. J. H. Mozley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) 1.755-770.
[96] Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 4. The idea is that the *Amores* merely "decorates the literary heritage gracefully and dissolves its seriousness into irony and play"; see Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy*, 172.
[97] For Ovid's sincerity see Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence*, 27-28. Ovid's sincerity, I believe, expands on a larger experiment in elegy (the illusion of sincerity) that Tibullus and Propertius partake in as well, and this sincerity is a quality that is frequently valued in Roman elegy. See, for example, A. W. Allen, "'Sincerity' and the Roman Elegists," *CP* 45 (1950): 145-60. See also Allen, "Sunt qui Propertium Malint," in *Critical Essays on Roman Literature: Elegy and Lyric*, ed. J. P. Sullivan (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 107-148; Gian Biagio Conte and Glenn W. Most, "Love without Elegy," *Poetics Today* 10, no. 3 (October 1989): 441-69. Sincerity is also a concern throughout Barbara Boyd's *Ovid's Literary Loves*. For more on elegiac sincerity, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

presentation fail to yield his desired interpretations. He seemingly turns to revision as a means by which he can guard against backlash but discovers, through elegy, just how contingent and irrevocable these self-presentations can be.[98]

Famously, in the opening line of Ovid's first love elegy (*Amores* 1.1), Ovid does not promise themes of love. Instead, he apparently trumpets themes of heroic epic, "arms and violent war." "*Arma*," the first word of the poem, recalls the incipit of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and by the end of the line, the "*gravi numero*" or grave measure of epic hexameter is confirmed (1.1.1).[99] All signs initially suggest that this line is an epic invocation, except for one sly alteration. Whereas the prophetic poet of Virgil "sings" ("*cano*" in the present tense), Ovid's "*vates*" "was preparing" ("*parabam*" in the imperfect).[100] He hints at a failure of inspiration, a process interrupted in the stages of preparation. The following line only confirms this interruption with a limping pentameter, revealing that the epic hexameter of the first line is actually part of an elegiac couplet. "*Par erat inferior versus — risisse Cupido / dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem*," Ovid explains, "The second verse was equal to the first until, it is said, Cupid

[98] See Barbara Weinlich, "The Story of a Poet's Apologetic Emancipation: The *Recusatio*-Narratives in Propertius 3.3, *Amores* 1.1, 2.1, and 3.1" *Helios* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 129-148. For correlation between book 1 of Propertius' collection with *Am.* 1.1 (and so forth) see also Walter Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom; die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1960), 295-302; Alison Keith, "*Amores* 1.1: Propertius and the Ovidian Programme," *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, vol. 6, ed. Carl Deroux (Brussels, 1992), 327-344. Cf. Kathleen Morgan, *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the Amores*, Mnemosyne 47, (Lugduni Batavorum: Brill, 1977), 9-10, 17-20.

[99] Subsequent references to the *Amores* are from James McKeown (ed.), *Ovid: Amores. Volume II: A Commentary on Book One*, ARCA 22 (Leeds, 1989).

[100] I understand Ovid's use of *uates* (1.1.6) as part of his claim to be an epic poet. As Alison Keith notes, it is often understood "at best an example of his celebrated *nequitia* (*Am.* 2.1.2) or, at worst, an example of his misunderstanding of the significance with which Virgil and Horace had invested the word." See A. M. Keith, "*Amores* 1.1," 332. See also, John Kevin Newman, *The Concept of Vates in Augustan Poetry* (Brussels: Latomus, 1967). Cf. Caroline A. Perkins, "Ovid's Erotic *Vates*," *Helios* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 53-62. Perkins examines Tibullus' use of the term *vates* and its adaptation for Ovid's funereal poem on the author.

laughed and pilfered a foot" (1.1.3-4) The epic invocation of the Muses subsequently turns into an elegiac complaint to Cupid, the god who now dictates his poetry, and Ovid questions the right (*iuris*, 1.1.5) by which Cupid usurps the epic *vates* from the Muses. "You have your own empire (*regna)*, beyond great and powerful," he exclaims, "so why lay claim (*adfectas)* to a new charge" (1.1.13-14)? With only one arrow, Cupid answers the complaint, and epic, the song of war and empire, is laid low by a boy. Now, in the poet's heart Cupid reigns (*regnat*, 1.1.26) as king.

The central element of elegy that Cupid's conquering demonstrates to be superior to epic is its ability to transform the poet. Ovid begins by identifying (implicitly) a distinction between elegy and epic: their degrees of subjectivity. Whereas in *Prop*. 2.9A, Propertius had distinguished between lyric and narrative modes of elegy and epic, Ovid initially assumes the subordinate role of the epic subject, the *vates* who opens the poem and invokes the muses, and expands it into that of elegy's more prominent speaker. In the first line, the "*arma*," which harken back to Virgil's invocation, and the first-person verb simulate an epic invocation, and Ovid provides in the following lines a short narrative. But ultimately the poem turns into an expression of the poet's thoughts and feelings, rather than a poem of nationhood. Ovid transforms the epic speaker, who rarely emerges from the background as it tells its narrative, into an elegiac speaker, who is foregrounded in "*questus*" or complaints (*Am*. 1.1.21). This transformation affects Ovid's body as well as character. "My new page rose well with the first verse," he claims, but "the next diminished my vigor [*nervos*]" (1.1.17-18). Cupid's theft of a poetic foot transforms Ovid from a fit epic poet to a proper elegiac poet, transforming him physically. Whereas Propertius' breast is already too small for epic (2.9.39-46), Ovid's *nervos*, not just his

"vigor" but his muscles (or possibly even his "*membrum virile*"),[101] shrink (*attenuat*)—they become *tenuis* or "slender" like elegiac verse. When Ovid next complains that he has no subject fit for this verse ("*materia … numeris levioribus apta*," 1.1.19), Cupid then transforms him into a lover (though still without a love object), a notable reversal of *Prop*. 1.1, wherein Propertius' preexisting love for Cynthia inspires him to write elegy.[102] This last act is the final transformation, and afterward Ovid acquiesces to the role of the elegiac lover.[103] Just as we discover elegy's transformative powers, how it emasculates Ovid and dictates his concern with personal affairs, Ovid describes the transformation of his own self image. What Ovid demonstrates in this distinction between epic and elegiac speakers and themes is elegy's ability to transform the poet. Epic, like the *Aeneid*, may be able to constitute and interrogate ideas of nationhood and empire, but elegy, with its subjective mode, is a genre of selfhood.

Before I discuss the subtleties of Ovid's transformation in *Am*. 1.1, I'd like to turn to *Am*. 2.1, Ovid's next *recusatio* in which he introduces the addressee's and readers' roles in this transformation. Ovid's *nomen*, which he introduces in *Am*. 1.1 and the elegiest that follow, is well-established by *Am*. 2.1. The poem even opens with Ovid's invocation of his name and reputation. "*Hoc quoque conposui Paelignis natus aquosis, / Ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae*," he begins, "This poem too I composed, I who was born by Paelignian waters, I, Naso, the poet of my wantonness" (2.1.1-2). In these first 2

[101] Lewis and Short, *nervus*, definition I.B.
[102] For Ovid's reversal of *Prop*. 1.1, see Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 138: for Ovid, "elegy exists despite, not because of, his inspiration." Cf., Erich Reitzenstein, "Das neue Kunstwollen in den Amores Ovids," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 84, no. 1 (January 1935): 67-73. On Cupid's sudden granting to Ovid a mistress and his "blatant portrayal of her as *materia*" in *Am*. 1.1, see Ellen Greene, *The Erotics of Domination*, 68-73.
[103] For transformation in *Am*. 1.1 and its connection to Ovid's protean persona elsewhere in the *Amores*, see Davis, *Fictus Adulter*, 62-67.

lines, Ovid assumes (or asserts) an image of himself as not only a poet but also one known for "*nequitiae*," wantonness or idleness, his own worthlessness. Returning to his *vatic* narrative in *Am*. 1.1, Ovid continues to describe his poetic ambitions and his failure so far:

> *Ausus eram, memini, caelestia dicere bella*
> *Centimanumque Gyen — et satis oris erat —,*
> *Cum male se Tellus ulta est, ingestaque Olympo*
> *Ardua devexum Pelion Ossa tulit*. (2.1.11-14)
>
> "I dared, so I recall, to tell of heavenly wars and the hundred-handed Gyas—and in sufficient style—, when Earth avenged herself, when steep Ossa and sloping Pelion were heaped upon Olympus."

Once more, Ovid sets himself up as a poet aspiring to write epic, one who is capable of its high style. Now, however, instead of a national epic he aims for a *gigantomachia*, until his epic ambition is again interrupted. "*In manibus nimbos et cum Iove fulmen habebam*," he says, "I held Jove with thunder clouds and lightning in his hands" (2.1.15-16). But then, "*Clausit amica fores*!" His beloved slammed her door, and "*ego cum Iove fulmen omisi*," "I dropped Jove with his lightning" (2.1.17) His epic is distracted by his love for his *puella*. He admits, as he does in *Am*. 1.1, that "*carmina purpureus … mihi dictat Amor*," "rosy Love dictates my songs to me" (2.1.38).

Ovid follows a similar narrative in *Am*. 1.1 (which as we'll see, he borrows from *Prop*. 3.3) but in *Am*. 2.1 Ovid focuses on a new dimension of elegy's transformative power: its relation to the audience. As in *Am*. 1.1, the poet sets out to write an epic but is interrupted, at which point his poetic subject is dictated to him. But whereas in *Am*. 1.1 Cupid forcibly transforms him into a love poet, in *Am*. 2.1 he chooses to return to elegy when epic cannot meet his personal needs. "*Iuppiter, ignoscas*," he says, asking for

pardon; he has "dropped" Jove because, "*nil me tua tela iuvabant*," "[his] darts help me with nothing" (2.1.19). Instead, he says, "*blanditias elegosque levis, mea tela, resumpsi*," "I have picked up again my darts: light-hearted, charming elegies" (2.1.21). His reasoning is that "*mollierunt duras lenia verba fores*," "gentle words can turn soft a hard door" (2.1.22). Elegy can transform obstinance into compliance. As song, Ovid attests, elegy has many powers. Song can call down the moon or call out the sun; it can open serpents' jaws and turn fountains back to their source (2.1.23-26). And now, too, it conquers doors. Of course, what Ovid actually refers to is not the door itself but the *puella* behind the door, the *dura puella* whom he hopes he can transform into a *mollis puella*. Thus Ovid writes,

> *Quid mihi profuerit velox cantatus Achilles?*
> *Quid pro me Atrides alter et alter agent,*
> *Quique tot errando, quot bello, perdidit annos,*
> *Raptus et Haemoniis flebilis Hector equis?*
> *At facie tenerae laudata saepe puellae,*
> *Ad vatem, pretium carminis, ipsa venit*. (2.1.29-34)
> "What benefit is there for me to sing of swift Achilles? What do they matter to me, the one and the other Atrides, whoever he was who spent as many years at war as wandering, or pathetic Hector, dragged by his Thessalian horses? But my delicate sweetheart's face, frequently praised, comes to the bard as a reward for his song."

Echoing Propertius' own emphasis, in book 2, of elegy's interpersonal utility—how it can represent the poet and his praise or persuasion of his *puella*—Ovid asserts the persuasive utility of elegy as one of its transformative powers.

Yet Ovid also seems aware in the role of the audience in the poet's own transformation. After having declared his name and reputation, Ovid elucidates his theme: "*hoc quoque iussit Amor*," "this poem too Love has commanded"; but then he warns off some of his readers. "*Procul hinc, procul este, severae*," he exclaims, "far from

here, be gone, serious readers" (2.1.3). "*Non estis teneris apta theatra modis*," he says, "you are not a fit audience for my tender measures" (2.1.3-4). Rather than a *severa theatra*, a serious audience, he prefers maids in love, boys experiencing their first love, and youths with similar afflictions, who can find their own experiences in his lines. This declaration of his preferred audience is distinct from the audience he supposes at the end of the poem, his *puella*, and this distinction signals his separable identities: he is a poet first, a lover second. To some extent, by acknowledging his role as a poet, Ovid also suggests that this self-presentation presents his "real" self-conception; however, his reference to his readers as a "*theatra*," a theatrical audience, also acknowledges them as witnesses to his play-acting or role-playing as a lover. Elegy's ability to transform and fashion the self, as Ovid identifies in *Am*. 1.1, straddles the boundaries between reality and fiction, social and literary selves. When confronting these straddled boundaries, Ovid seems to have recognized that audience matters. In their minds are these boundaries crossed and judgments applied. In some readers he can coax out rhetorically sympathy, empathy, and praise. In others, he may garner only contempt, a dangerous attitude when one's literary and social self are both at stake.

What becomes apparent in these lines is Ovid's anxiety about the reception of his poetry and his self-presentation. This anxiety seems to be concerned with not only who reads his poems but his lack of control over their interpretation. In fact, *Am*. 1.1 even raises these concerns through its relationship with one of Propertius' earlier *recusationes*, *Prop*. 3.3. The series of events in *Am*. 1.1 closely mirror those of *Prop*. 3.3, wherein Propertius borrows heavily from both Callimachus' preface to the elegiac *Aetia* and Ennius' introduction to his epic *Annales*. The poem begins with Propertius' dream, in

which he is on Mount Helicon and has the power to sing epic. He stoops to drink from the same stream as the epic poet Ennius has, but Phoebus stops him and tells him to write the gentle, short poems that he was destined for: elegies. Calliope then approaches Propertius to tell him that he will be happy ("*contentus*," 3.3.39) with elegy and that epic is not for him before sprinkling his lips with the water of Philitas, instead of Ennius. Ovid, like Propertius, begins *Am*. 1.1 with an attempt to write an epic, likely a national epic too if the opening allusion to Virgil's *Aeneid* suggests his model. Ovid also follows Propertius by having a god dictate his subject matter; however, whereas Apollo tells Propertius to write on love and Propertius accepts compliantly, Cupid tells Ovid to write on love and Ovid is resistant.[104] Finally, Propertius accepts poetic inspiration in the form of water from Philitas' stream, unlike Ovid, whom Cupid must inspire with a well-aimed arrow.[105] The most apparent difference between these two poems, indeed between this poem and the larger Callimachean tradition, is Ovid's initial refusal to accept Cupid's directive to write elegy. Cupid is not, as Ovid himself says, a proper ruler over poetry, which makes Ovid's resistance reasonable; however, Cupid ironically enforces it in a warlike manner. In fact, whereas most poets in *recusationes* accept that they may not be fit, physically or emotionally, Ovid is rather confident in his epic ability. The entire poem, truly, reveals Ovid's resistance, which, in turn, reveals the *forced* nature of his transformation. It may be his wit and personality on display in the poem but Ovid still has

[104] Cf. Rebecca Armstrong, "Retiring Apollo: Ovid on the Politics and Poetics of Self-Sufficiency," *The Classical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (December 2004): 528-550. Armstrong gathers excerpts of Ovid's works that incorporate Apollo to assert that in *Am*. 1.1, the replacement of Apollo with cupid is a joke at the former's expense and, to some extent, a rejection of Augustan ideology.
[105] Cf. McKeown, vol. 2, 26: "The Muses gave Hesiod a pipe and a staffa s a symbol of his poetic inspiration … Archilochus, a lyre … Gallus, the pipe which they had once given to Hesiod … Cupid shoots Ovid with an arrow."

very little say in his transformation when Cupid conquers him and diminishes his physical vigor. Ovid's lack of control in this transformation parallels some of his anxieties about readership in *Am.* 2.1. Ovid can articulate a *persona* but he has little power over his readers' interpretations and reactions. In the poem's reflection on *Prop.* 3.3, we might speculate Ovid's familiarity with Propertius' own transformation or, perhaps, the poem reflects on Ovid's own earlier transformation, since it is, after all, a revision.

Before *Am.* 2.1 and even before *Am.* 1.1, Ovid reveals his anxiety in his *Amores* about self-presentation and readership in the epigram which prefaces our only extant version of these works.[106] In fact, Ovid places this epigram there to inform his readers that he has thoroughly revised this edition.[107] 3 books used to be 5. "The author preferred his work this way," Ovid says, "and though you may not take any pleasure in reading it, at least your punishment will be lighter [*levior*] with 2 fewer books" (*Epigramma Ipsius*, ll. 2-4). What Ovid prefers about his revision and whether it goes beyond reduction is unclear; however, revision has several advantages, especially in relation to the *auctor* (a much more "authoritative" presentation than his usual term, *poeta*)[108] and the readers of the *Amores*. Revision becomes a means by which he can re-present the himself in the way that he prefers to be presented; it becomes a new form of self-fashioning in a genre that already revolves around subjectivity. Indeed, this re-presentation may even be in

[106] See Francesca K. A. Martelli, *Ovid's Revisions: The Editor as Author* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). On evidence whether a five-book version was circulated see McKeown, *Ovid:* Amores, *Text, Prolegomena and Commentary in Four Volumes*, vol. 1, 75-89. On whether a five-book version is entirely fictitious see Alessandro Barchiesi, "Ovid the Censor," *American Journal of Ancient History* 13 (1988): 96-105.
[107] Cf. Laura Jensen, "On the edge of the text: preface and reader in Ovid's *Amores*," *Helios* 39, no. 10 (Spring 2012): 1-19.
[108] Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 146.

response to a controversial reception of the *Amores*' first book or, even, the first edition of his *Amores*. Some critics suggest that *Am*. 2.1 evidences this reception,[109] and thus he requests the flight of a "severe audience," lest they criticize him. Indeed, part of the revision project, although the absence of a first edition hinders our perspective, demonstrates Ovid's interest in self-presentation: his reduction of 5 books into 3 refines a larger "story" of his early career, into a completed version with "a beginning, middle, and end, in three acts."[110] Both his request for a certain audience and his revisions demonstrate Ovid's attempt to maintain control over his *corpus,* to stabilize his authorial transformations. However, despite all his revisions (in the *Amores* and in the books that follow), he cannot ultimately maintain "authority" over them. Rather than refining his self-image, he merely reduplicates it and disrupts the chronologies by which readers might trace the development of his life or work. *Am*. 1.1, as we have seen, is supposed to depict his elegiac initiation, but the poem may very well have been re-written years later. Even if it survived his revision unchanged, we might ask what the poem meant to him—or what his resistance to a forcible transformation—meant to him upon the second publication. The reduplication of *personae* and our lack of a first edition obscures our understanding of Ovid's intention, yet we can still find in his epic/elegy *recusationes* his definition of elegy around its power to transform the self. In his works, as many have noted previously, Ovid interrogates different dimensions of the self, the internal and external, a poet and a lover; but perhaps the most valuable lesson about self-presentation that Ovid learns is by an accidental interrogation through his revisions: how slippery self-

[109] Cf. Martelli, *Ovid's Revisions*, 53; McKeown, *Ovid*, vol. 1, 76. The basis of this discussion is whether "*hoc quoque composui*" refers to one or more earlier books.
[110] Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*, 136.

presentation can be and how attempts to control these transformations may only cause identities to proliferate.

This lesson is one that Ovid continues to learn throughout his career, though for a time he sees fit that he abandon elegy. His third and final book of Ovid's *Amores*, as we have it, distances itself from the epic/elegy polemic as seen in *Am*. 1.1 and *Am*. 2.1. Instead, Ovid begins with a *recusatio* from tragedy, a genre that tempts Ovid as early as *Am*. 2.18. This *recusatio* proves different than the others in that it ends with Ovid's promise to eventually write tragedy. The personification of tragedy in this poem tells Ovid that "*tempus erat, thyrso pulsum graviore moveri*," "it is time that you were moved by the stroke of a weightier thyrsus," and Ovid agrees with a concession: "*teneri properentur Amores, / dum vacat; a tergo grandius urguet opus*," "a greater work [i.e., tragedy] urges me ahead, but let my tender Loves speed ahead while I have leisure" (3.1.23, 69-70). Appropriately, and perhaps due to his revisions, book 3 of the *Amores* features Ovid's renunciation of Corinna and, in the final poem, a renunciation of elegy. "*Inbelles elegi, genialis Musa, valete*," he says, "peaceful elegies, merry Muse, farewell" (3.15.19). "*Corniger increpuit thyrso graviore Lyaeus: / pulsanda est magnis area maior equis*," Ovid concludes, "Horned Lyaeus struck with a weightier thyrsus: a greater space must be beaten by powerful chargers" (3.15.17-18). Ovid eventually compose the *Ars Amatoria* as well, whose poet-lover *persona* closely resembles that of the *Amores*, though now fully a *praeceptor amoris*, a tutor in love, but he does also turn to both tragedy (his lost *Medea*) and epic (his *Metamorphoses*). Like Propertius, who similarly renounces his beloved in his third book, Ovid's next brush with the genre is an attempt to re-present himself as a Roman Callimachus (*Prop.* 4.1.64). Propertius, in his new pursuit,

occasionally retains subjective mode so prominent in love elegy (spoken from the poet's point of view) but in other poems he plays with the speaker's identity, perception, and with elegy's flexible conventions and eclectic roots to create a presciently "postmodern" collection. Ovid himself experiments with forms of elegy like those in *Prop*. book 4, such as the *Heroides* and, especially, the elegiac *Fasti*, which are to some extent an attempt to refashion his *persona* as Propertius had done in his dealings with *aetia*. He was, perhaps, too late, if his own claims in the *Tristia* are true, that his *Ars Amatoria* along with some unknown *error* advanced his exile. In 8 AD, his worries about his self-presentation, audience, and misinterpretation are realized, and he returns to elegy to redeem himself and, appropriately, to "revise" his amatory presentation through another elegiac collection.

Thus, in the love elegies of Tibullus to those of Ovid, the elegists craft their genre in contrast with epic as one of subjectivity. Tibullus first emphasizes its realistic subject matter — the personal affairs of the poet. The labor and subject of epic do not suit the poet, who is more concerned with maintaining his beloved. And pastoral *epos* may sound ideal but is impossible for the poet in Rome. Next, Propertius in his second book emphasizes elegy's rhetorical utility, its interpersonal mode by which the poet can express a social self. Elegy's ability to persuade and elicit sympathy, he says, is more useful than epic's memorializing of wars or constitution of nationhood. Finally, Ovid emphasizes the prominence of elegy's subjective mode in contrast with that of epic, in which it is subordinated, before identifying elegy's dual audience (the *puella* and the reader) to which this subject or *persona* is being presented. Each of the elegists use the genre to articulate a self, both a fictional character and an authorial image, who serves

Amor and his *puella* over his country, displays his *mollitas* or effeminacy, and revels in *otium*. But whereas Tibullus uses elegy to interrogate possibilities of a fragmented self who moves from one topic to another in a stream of consciousness manner, Propertius investigates a *persona* caught between epic and elegiac, masculine and feminine. Finally, Ovid, who embraces the rhetorical nature of the self and the power of language to transform and articulate the self, experiments with its internal and external dimensions and discovers by accident just how immutable and contingent such self-presentation can be.

It is no wonder, then, that in these works and those that follow, metamorphosis is a point of fascination, especially for Ovid. The figure of Proteus, particularly, echoes through his works: the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Fasti*, and especially the *Metamorphoses*.[111] In his epic, Proteus is even elevated into the work's most representative figure, a god who can transform himself at will. Perhaps Ovid, Lanham's preeminent *homo rhetoricus*, identifies with this figure, finding in rhetoric his own ability to craft the self and finding in elegy a facility for self-presentation. Ovid may even take such a cue from Propertius' fourth book of elegies, in which his attempt to transform himself into a Roman Callimachus (likewise, his attempt to realign elegy with Callimachean *aetia*) is prefaced in the second poem with the figure of Vertumnus, another god of change who appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book 14) and *Fasti* (6.409). In Propertius' poem, Vertumnus usurps the speaking role of the poet-lover but before declaring his identity, when the reader may still expect Propertius' voice, he asks,

[111] See *Am*. 2.15 and 3.12, *Ars Amatoria* 1.19, *Fasti*, 1.367, and *Metamorphoses* 2.9, 8.730-737, 11.222-228, and 13.918.

"*Quid mirare meas tot in uno corpore formas*," "why do you marvel at my many shapes yet in one body?" This question lingers throughout the fourth book and, indeed, throughout the elegiac tradition in its diverse geographies and in the centuries that follow. Vertumnus, of course, is referring to his actual body, but in that first line, Propertius withholds the speaker's identity. We expect the poet himself to speak these lines, and his readers, at the threshold of elegy's generic transformation, are allowed to momentarily marvel at the poet's ability to transform both himself and the genre through elegy. As I said in the introduction to this chapter, however, Ovid eventually attributes his exile to elegy's transformative power. The power of Proteus can have dire consequences. His only hope, it seems, is to return to the genre that got him into this mess — to redeem himself in the elegiac *Tristia*.

As a number of scholars note, in these later works love elegy seems "to come apart at the seams,"[112] a quality that will make the genre especially useful in its reception. The preceding *recusationes* consistently define elegy in relation to epic, demonstrating elegy's self-aware nature — its explicit position within literary and generic traditions. It is this self-awareness by which the elegists re-expand the generic boundaries into an extremely various corpus that features epistolary, aetiological, and didactic themes. This corpus is what readers and imitators in the medieval and early modern world inherit, a loose but highly rhetorical genre, perfect for the eventual curricula of humanists, which fixate so intently on rhetoric. As the *Tristia* and *Heroides* especially are adapted for these curricula and as student's discover the story of Ovid's life told through his elegies, the

[112] Farrell, "Classical Genre in Theory and in Practice," 397.

genre's facility for self-presentation—the elegist's definition of elegy as a form for subjectivity—resurfaces, emerging in England, uniquely, in not only neo-Latin poetry but also vernacular poems to constitute and interrogate selfhood. The genre's eclectic nature, furthermore, provides elegiac *personae* beyond the poet-lover or the poet-scholar, models and precedents that allow them to tailor their self-presentation, in these poems, to their individual needs. More than a millennium later, the elegists pass on the power of Proteus.

Chapter 2: Shakespeare, the Ovidian Poet

Disciplining Self-Presentation in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

"Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me," Proteus exclaims in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.[113] Love, he discovers, has transformative qualities that have changed his values, causing him to "neglect his studies" and "set the world at naught" (1.1.67-8). Similarly, in pursuit of Proteus, his mistress Julia changes her appearance, and Valentine, who once scorned love, becomes "metamorphosed" by Silvia (2.1.28). Each of these "changes" seemingly springs from love's transformative power; yet, these metamorphoses also accompany those of Proteus and Valentine from "youth" to "perfect man." Having finished formal education, the two gentlemen venture forth to formulate new identities. Valentine seeks experience in the world abroad, whereas Proteus chooses to remain home for love. Valentine warns him that

> as the most forward bud
> Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
> Even so by love the young and tender wit
> Is turned to folly, blasting in the bud,
> Losing his verdure, even in the prime,
> And all the fair effects of future hopes. (1.1.45-50)

Likewise, Antonio worries that Proteus' experience may not be "perfected" (1.3.23) or completely formed due to his "shapeless idleness" (1.1.8). In these lines, the concern is that Proteus' choice, as opposed to Valentine's, will result in a deficient transformation, that he will be defective rather than perfected. Comedy, especially Shakespearean comedy as William C. Carroll shows, revels in such metamorphosis, which gravitates

[113] William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ed. William C. Carroll (London: Thomson Learning, 2004), 230-231, 1.1.66. Subsequent references will be made parenthetically to act, scene, and line number.

around themes of love, language, and identity.[114] Shakespeare follows suit in *The Two Gents* and, much as he does in proximate works like *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Venus and Adonis*, and *Titus Andronicus*, he examines the intersection of these themes in his grammar school education.[115] But, as I argue, while Proteus and Valentine confront their newfound independence, they reach back into their education to transform themselves—a relevant subject for Shakespeare himself, who only recently turned playwright.

At the heart of these transformations, indeed at the heart of his early plays, lies Ovid, the poet of metamorphosis and an author whose poetry transformed his own biography.[116] Rather than the *Metamorphoses*, however, Ovid's elegies supply models for the *Two Gents*' transformation, for his *Heroides*, *Tristia*, *Amores*, and *Ars Amatoria* prefaced another transformation: an early modern male's transition to rhetorical school and adolescence. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, who were taught self-presentation through books such as Castiglione's *Courtier*, Ovid's elegies demonstrated poetry and rhetoric could formulate identity. In these elegies, Ovid creates a

[114] See William C. Carroll, *The Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Carroll suggests that metamorposis is not only a structural basis for comedy but Shakespeare's chief attraction to comedy, in that it provokes paradoxes of love, identity, and language.
[115] See especially Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*; see also William P. Weaver, *Untutored Lines: The Making of the English Epyllion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).
[116] See Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, whose seminal study traces Shakespeare's *imitatio* of Ovid throughout his career, from "flaunted" Ovidianism to "inwoven." Bate builds on Leonard Barkan's work, examining new approaches to Ovid and metamorphosis during this period that shift away from moralizing to appreciating and delighting in Ovid's eroticism and the transformative power he attributes to the imagination. Ovid's influence on Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece* is discussed thoroughly in Clark Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and William Keach, *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1977). For how Ovid's *Amores* influenced Shakespeare's sonnets, see M. L. Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence*. Recent re-examinations of Shakespeare's Ovidianism incorporate the influence of the *Metamorphoses* with the elegies more comprehensively. See especially Heather James, "Shakespeare's learned heroines in Ovid's schoolroom," *Shakespeare and the Classics*, ed. Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 66-85 and Vanda Zajko, "Petruchio is 'Kated': *The Taming of the Shrew* and Ovid," *Shakespeare and the Classics*, 33-48.

"biographical" *persona* that influenced how his audience viewed him so significantly that it advanced his exile and caused him to reflect, late in his career, on his elegies' biographical function. Consequently, as these students gain their independence and begin applying these lessons, Ovid becomes a model for fashioning the self. These poems, which feature Ovid speaking, teaching, and lamenting about love and exile, likewise become models for *Two Gents*' main characters, who imitate Ovid quite literally. Valentine, whom the Duke exiles for pursuing his daughter, eventually imitates the *Tristia*'s repentant Ovid, whom Augustus exiled (supposedly) for pursuing his daughter, Julia. Likewise, Proteus, whose mistress is even named Julia, imitates the *Amores*' promiscuous lover when he assumes his "changeful" nature. As Proteus and Valentine create identities in relation to Ovid's elegiac *personae*, Shakespeare reveals the genre's importance as a model of both rhetoric and self-presentation.

However, Shakespeare also fears Ovid as a negative influence — the *Ars Amatoria*'s role in his exile is cause for alarm — and thus the play's central conflicts derive from these works. The play's contention between friendship and love, for example, draws heavily on the *Amores* and *Ars*, which view friendship as a threat to love.[117] In contrast, Ovid's *Tristia* extols friendship and is even taught beside Cicero's *De Amicitia*, his essay on friendship. As Valentine and Proteus imitate these Ovidian models, their conflicting priorities clash in the final scene. When Proteus attempts to rape Silvia,

[117] For several important works of scholarship that have examined the love-friendship conflict, usually from the perspective of Ciceronian theories of friendship, see Lauren J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain* (Bloomington, IN: The Principia Press, 1937); Jeffrey Masten reframes this conflict in terms of homoeroticism. See Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Along similar lines, Laurie Shannon builds on Shakespeare's interest in friendship theory by examining it in other works, particularly how it works with figures of sovereignty. See Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Shakespeare declares his path unethical, but another conflict arises when Valentine inexplicably forgives Proteus and offers Silvia to him. As early as Alexander Pope, audiences have been disturbed by this offer, since Valentine supposedly provides a moral alternative. Elegy supplies a partial solution through Julia and Silvia, in that Shakespeare adapts the elegiac mistresses' role of ironically subverting their lovers, much as he adapts Ovid's *doctae puellae* for other subversive roles in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*.[118] In the *Amores*, Corinna's voice is heard only in reported speech and the reader must otherwise infer her reactions to Ovid's monologues to fully understand the (often ironic) situation. Shakespeare "dramatically" expands this role so that Julia and Silvia, of course, do speak and so that these speeches undermine their lovers' actions. Shakespeare even reproduces their silence in a way that creates irony, first in Proteus' farewell to Julia and then in the final scene, when Silvia responds with silence while Valentine and her father bestow her as a "gift" (5.4.146).

The message that develops by the play's conclusion affirms Ovid's elegies as models for self-presentation but also reveals its flaws. Shakespeare recognizes that literal imitation of Ovid's *personae* can have serious consequences. He echoes early modern curricula's concession of the *Amores*' enticement while condemning its morality. Moreover, he even skeptically approaches Valentine's moral alternative in the *Tristia*.

[118] For Shakespeare's adaptation of *doctae puellae*, see Heather James, "Shakespeare's Learned Heroines in Ovid's Schoolroom," 66-85. Most scholarship on gender in *Two Gents'* focuses on Julia and cross-dressing. See especially Carroll, "Forget to Be a Woman," *The Metamorphoses*, 103-140, which connects cross-dressing with Ovidian metamorphosis. The romantic subtext of this trope likewise borrows from Ovid. Notably, Carroll asserts that Julia's "metamorphosis" prompts Proteus' final alteration (117). Alongside this, I consider Silvia who, in contrast, does not change and is more direct. Both she and Julia are the "centers of constancy" in this play (109). So when Valentine chooses Proteus over her, Silvia's sudden silence, I argue, undermines his prioritizing of friendship, though she does not yet alter his point of view, as Julia has Proteus'.

This examination is significant in the early 1590s as the amateur poet-playwright begins presenting himself as an Ovidian author.[119] Writing both poems and plays, Shakespeare features Ovid so prominently that Francis Meres declares Ovid's soul to live on in these works. His Ovidian model seems even to be "flaunted" during his early career, in *Titus Andronicus, Venus and Adonis*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*.[120] Moreover, these works and their especially Ovidian scenes, as Lynn Enterline has shown, depend on and depict Shakespeare's background in grammar school training. Shakespeare's ostentatious incorporation of Ovid with his educational background not only signals Shakespeare's Ovidian self-presentation but reflects its practice as cultivated by his rhetorical education. This practice both attracts and unsettles Shakespeare.[121] In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, these strands come together as Shakespeare examines it through two young men at the thresholds of independence.

For many early modern schoolboys, Ovid's elegies accompanied their symbolic and biological transitions into *adulescentia*.[122] A schoolboy's move to upper school, which culminated in oratory and civic-moral instruction, marked this transition's initial

[119] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 131. See also, Patrick Cheney, *Shakespeare, National Poet-Playwright*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), especially chapters 1 and 2.
[120] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 173. For Bate, this flaunting is less so a sign of Shakespeare's Ovidian proclamation and more so his developing skill at *imitatio*; he has not yet "digested" Ovid's works. However, I am inclined to believe it is both. See also Colin Burrow, "Shakespeare and Humanistic Culture" in *Shakespeare in the Classics*, ed. Martindale and Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 20-21.
[121] Shakespeare's "ambivalence" toward Ovid is key to understanding so many of his allusions. Cf. Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 15.
[122] In Rome, *adulescentia* was "a stage of life between childhood and full maturity," usually ranging between puberty and marriage. Mark Golden, "Adolescence," *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine, and Sabine R. Huebner (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). For the remainder of this article, I refer to *adulescentia* by its English cognate. For early modern ideas of "adolescence," see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, "Images of Youth," *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 10-38.

stage.[123] Although students often kept the same classroom upon entering upper school, they were subjected to more difficult, intensive, and independent work, they had a new and more qualified master, and they faced more corporal punishment. Remarking on these qualities, Walter Ong argued that this rhetorical education provided such young men *rites de passage* — a symbolic transition to adolescence.[124] Although a tired paradigm, these puberty rites still provide a valuable heuristic for viewing educational transition as a ritual process.[125] As students transitioned to adolescence, their lessons likewise transitioned to oratory and civic life with the goal of producing a unified self in the form of a rhetorically capable gentleman for the good of the commonwealth.[126] Curricula and schoolmasters framed the student's transition into upper school, from grammar to rhetoric, as a major step toward achieving this self, and their increased emphasis on moral philosophy, especially concerning man's relation with God, the state, and fellow citizens, acknowledged the adolescent's impending independence and prepared him for his education's next stage: application and experience.

To accompany this transition, English curricula assigned texts that not only taught oratory but also appealed to students' increasing maturity. Ovid's elegies, which conventionally represent both speech and epistles, served as a model for oratorical and

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[123] It is difficult to speak about English education in the 16th century since the texts and process largely depended on one's socio-economic status, geographical location, and the different curricula between schools. In the 1530s and 1540s, curricula became progressively unified based on the system at Eton. The schools for which we have evidence still vary in curricula; however, as Thomas Baldwin has observed, the evidence that we do have suggests that at the very least these schools had similar fundamental routines. See Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine & lesse Greeke*, Vol. 1, 3.

[124] Walter J. Ong, "Latin Language Study as Renaissance Puberty Rite," *Studies in Philology* 56, no. 2 (1959): 103-124.

[125] See William P. Weaver, *Untutored Lines*. Lynn Enterline supplies an excellent criticism of William Kerrigan's pyschoanalytic treatment of Ong's argument. See Enterline, "*Shakespeares Schoolroom*," 141-2.

[126] Enterline, 75-6. Whatever humanist curricula may have intended, as Enterline argues, the result is a self much more divided along lines of gender and politics, especially.

epistolary composition.[127] Furthermore, as poetry, it cultivated an interest for boys and adolescents.[128] These qualities made it a natural model for introducing rhetoric. Erasmus, for example, when suggesting practice material, remarks that

> In these epistolary themes, [the schoolmaster] ought to take choice and care to put forth those above all that may charm that age with pleasantness, as if enticements or baits. … Of the first kind of themes are certainly Ovid's amatory poems, in which perhaps that rude age should not altogether be exercised. Yet, his *Heroides* are fairly pure, and nothing prevents this theme from being handled chastely and modestly.[129]

These elegies, generally, were intended to appeal to schoolboys, and Erasmus' quandary, in this passage, is that their amatory themes may serve as enticements (*illecebrae*) but also have the potential to corrupt these children. Thus, in John Milton's reflections on his education, he will reflect on his experience with this very quandary, describing how he was "so allured to read" the "smooth elegiac poets" until he was able to recognize when they were "unchaste"; "their art I still applauded," he says, "but the men I deplored."[130]

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[127] Notably, for oratorical and epistolary composition, prose and verse examples were thought to differ only in external form, not structurally, and thus poems were also used for models of composition. See Baldwin, *small Latine*, Vol. 1, 250, 289. For manuscript evidence of a student's reading of the *Heroides* for letter-writing purposes, see Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine & lesse Greeke*, vol. 2, 422-423.

[128] For an example, see Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine*, Vol. 1, 119-120. In order to acquire vocabulary at St. Paul's, "from 'moral matter' [students] proceeded gently into unmoral or immoral matter as represented by the *De Tristibus* [*Tristia*], *Metamorphoses*, and *Epistles* of Ovid. These were to 'induce' the boys to poetry, and had long been standard works for that process. Consequently, the boys are already in the fourth form turning and proving verses, preparatory to beginning composition in verse in the fifth form, the first of upper school." Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius* likewise assigns Ovid's *Tristia*. See Richard Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius or The Grammar Schoole*, ed. E. T. Campagnac (London: Constable & Co., 1917), 121, 192-3.

[129] Erasmus, "De conscribendis epistolis," *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi: Ordinis primi tomus secundus*, ed. J. C. Margolin and P. Mesnard (Amsterdam: Brill, 1971), 231-2. Translation mine. For an accessible translation, see Charles Fantazzi, "On the Writing of Letters," *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 25, ed. J. K. Sowards (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 1-254.

[130] See Milton's "Apology for a Pamphlet [Smectymnuus]," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 862-953, 889-890: "[I] was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended. Whereof some were grave orators and historians ... others were the smooth elegiac poets, where of the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easy and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome. … I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient, that if I found those authors [the elegists] anywhere speaking unworthy things of themselves; or unchaste of

Curricula typically followed Erasmus by prescribing Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia* for their modesty, but most students owned Ovid's complete works, wherein they could find the *Amores* as well as the *Ars*.[131] Indeed, Erasmus suggests that students turn to Ovid's love poems for amatory letters intended to inspire a girl's mutual love.[132] The widespread knowledge of these Ovidian works suggests that their accessibility and risqué content encouraged furtive reading on the adolescent's part, alongside the *Heroides* and *Tristia*. Shakespeare was certainly one who had knowledge of these works. The epigraph to *Venus and Adonis*, for example, features a couplet from the *Amores*' opening poem.[133] Moreover, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Lucentio secretly woos Bianca as a tutor while translating *Heroides* 1, a poem used to exemplify chastity through the figure of Penelope.[134] Lucentio's reading of the *Heroides* in an educational setting merely covers what he truly desire to "profess": "*The Art to Love*."[135]

More importantly, these texts were the first models by which student's learned to create and present a *persona*. Students learned *ethopoeia*, literally the making of a "character," from exercises in Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* and modelled their attempts

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those names which before they had extolled, this effect it wrought with me: from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored."

[131] Likely, the *Amores* and *Ars* were taught infrequently; however, some schools did use them. On reading the *Amores* and *Ars* in school, for example, Henry Peacham supportively remarks "the wit with the truely ingenuous and learned will beare out the wantonnesse: for with the weeds there are delicate flowers in those walkes of *Venus*." See Peacham, *Peacham's Compleat Gentleman*, ed. George Stuart Gordon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), 87-88. On their use in curricula, see also Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 97.

[132] Erasmus, "De conscribendis epistolis," 511-512.

[133] Even if it was not Shakespeare's choice to use this epigraph, his publisher Richard Field, who may alternatively have chosen the epigraph, was only a few years under Shakespeare at the very same school and would have had exposure in a very similar context.

[134] See Act 3, Scene 1, William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Signet Edition, ed. Stephen Orgel (New York: Penguin Books, 2000).

[135] Ibid, 4.2.7.

on Ovid's *Heroides*. Such activities required them to practice "*imitatio & espressio morum personae subiectae*," imitation and presentation of the supplied *persona*'s moral habits (i.e. customs or traditions), as well as their emotions ("*passiua*" *ethopoeia*).[136] The schoolmaster would supply this *persona* from mythology or history within a specific rhetorical situation, and students would imagine what words this *persona* might utter and, to convincingly convey feelings, would try to feel the emotions of that *persona*.[137] The *Heroides* exemplified this practice in its depiction of, for example, Penelope lamenting the absence of her husband and Dido the faithlessness of Aeneas. In this exercise, they imitated both the supplied character and Ovid in his creation of this character. Ovid's skill at creating a *persona* is also on display in his *Tristia*, a work in which he attempts to redeem his previously wanton authorial *persona* from exile. Indeed, the *Tristia* (and the *Heroides*) were used as models for letter-writing, and thus students imitated Ovid to create not only literary characters but their own *personae*. The Latin "*persona*" and the English "person" could denote both literary character and actual self in early modern England,[138] and as Terry Sherwood notes, these terms' prominence and their range of

[136] On classical use of *ethopoeia* and *prosopopoeia*, see S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome form the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 266-7; D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 197-9. On the Roman elegists' own backgrounds in these exercises, see Alison Keith, *Propertius*, 19-44.

[137] As Enterline notes, "school lessons in eloquence taught young orators that success was more than a matter of learning to imitate precedent Latin texts fluently and accurately. It also meant learning to feel for oneself, and convey to others, the many passions represented in them" (121-2). In his *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian identifies clarity, brevity, and sincerity (*fides*) as important elements of rhetoric (2.5.7), remarking later that "the prime essential for stirring the emotions of others is, in my opinion, first to feel those emotions oneself" (6.2.2). And, as Enterline had discovered, a young author in his commonplace book was careful to cite Cicero's remark that "an oratour must first put on these passions which he would stirre in another, for passion conceived in the mind, is quickly formed in the speech and hence beget like impressions in others by a subtil & lively contagion" (132).

[138] The OED's primary definitions denote "person" as "I. A role taken by a person" and "II. An individual human being; a man, woman, or child." []. Similarly, Lewis and Short define the Latin *persona* as "a personage, character, or part" and "a human being… a person."

definitions make them more appropriate for discussing the early modern "self" than the usual modern vocabulary (e.g., "subject" and "identity").[139] Thus, *ethopoeia* practiced the fashioning of literary characters as much as the self, requiring students to consider similar elements of composition, and elegy supplied models for this practice.

Furthermore, Ovid himself served as an explicit model for self-presentation. As adolescent initiates, students were learning the craft of selfhood. Books, such as Castiglione's *Courtier*, instructed them on self-presentation's importance, and their rhetorical instruction was intended to prepare them for this task, emphasizing eloquence and *sprezzatura*. Poetry, too, formed an essential part of self-presentation. George Puttenham presents poetry as a "living art," necessary for the courtier and his self-presentation.[140] Certainly, lyric verse such as the Petrarchan sonnet can construct identity, but early modern curricula privileged elegy, partially because of its ease, rhetorical nature, and epistolary examples and partially because students could observe Ovid's own self-presentation and because of its clear rhetorical nature. From his *Amores* and *Ars* to his *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, readers could follow Ovid's life: his rise as a poet after abandoning law school, his amorous youth, and finally his decline in exile. In *Tristia* 5.1, he declares, "*sumque argumenti conditor ipse mei*," "I myself am the architect of my story."[141] "*Argumentum*," which I loosely translate as "story," straddles

[139] Terry Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern Literature*, 46-8.
[140] Ayako Kawanami, "Courtliness and Poetry in Sidney, Lyly, and Greene," *Tudor Court Culture* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010), 114. In the final chapters of his essay, Puttenham asserts the importance for the good poet or maker "to dissemble" and connects it explicitly to a courtier's dissemblance and *sprezzatura*: a courtier should "behave himself as he may worthily retain the credit of his place and profession of a very courtier, which is, in plain terms, cunningly to be able to dissemble." Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, , 378-379.
[141] Ovid, "Tristia: Book V," *Tristia - Ex Ponto*, ed. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 208. Translation mine.

social and literary boundaries, potentially meaning both "reality" and "fictional representation," and Ovid appropriately defines his own role as its "*conditor*" — "architect" or "author." For these young men, nearly independent, the ability to craft themselves, as Ovid did, both appealed and was useful. Elegy was considered a genre for youth because it appealed to them and assumed amorous themes, but it was also relevant for that stage of life when young men reached the "thresholds" of their independence and encountered new demands on their *personae*. Thus, Christopher Marlowe translates Ovid's *Amores* while at Cambridge, and John Donne writes elegies at the Inns of Court. Ben Jonson in his *Poetaster* even presents the Roman elegists at a similar age as Marlowe and Donne (as well as Proteus and Valentine). Shakespeare, who went through a similar grammar school education, transforms this experience into the two young men of Verona, who face independence for the first time, and he examines it through their conflicting values as they adapt different Ovidian models.

Elegy appealed so much and was thus assigned to students because its themes addressed major issues of their *adulescentia*, particularly friendship and love.[142] Shakespeare's objection to elegy, as we'll see, mirrors that of Erasmus and other writers of curricula, which is that Ovid's value in regard to these themes shift with each collection, and some of these values prove immoral or problematic. Curricula generally endorsed Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia*, which schoolboys mined for poetic material and moral philosophy, and ignores the *Amores* and *Ars*. Whereas the *Heroides* could supply legends of good women, the *Tristia* convey a repentant Ovid and models of friendship. In

[142] On how elegy depicts the circulation of female sexuality to appeal to and consolidate homosocial bonds, see Alison Keith, *Propertius*, 115-138.

the *Tristia*, Ovid laments his exile for a *carmen et error*, a song and a sin, and addresses letters to unnamed friends to praise them for their constancy. Consequently, curricula such as William Kempe's joined the *Tristia* with Cicero's *De Amicitia*, a dialogue between three men, who discuss what "true" friendship entails.[143] Over the course of the dialogue, they assert that true friendship can occur only in good men and that such a friendship perfects a person, almost creating a new individual from the two friends: "out of two he almost would make one."[144] A true friend is an *alter idem*, "another the same," later rendered as an *alter ego* or "another I."[145] This essay would be supplemented by classical *exempla*, including the friendship Theseus and Pirithous as well as Orestes and Pylades, models for fidelity among men. The *Tristia* echo these ideas in their praise of friends and make similar use of these *exempla*.[146] Consequently the pairing of these two texts made Ovid's *Tristia* a resource for petitioning and praising friends in epistolary form.

In contrast with the *Tristia*, Ovid's *Amores* treats friendship as a threat to the stability of love. Generally, in love elegy, male friends, no matter how close, are conveyed as rivals and threaten an elegist's pursuit of women. In the *Ars*, wherein Ovid theorizes the "art of loving," he warns that "friendship and constancy are but names. It is

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[143] There is an abundance of evidence for reading *De Amicitia* at or around this stage. *De Amicitia*, for example, was included in the fifth form of the solidified Eton system; Roger Ascham makes a similar suggestion in "Scholemaster" (1570); and Kempe places it in fifth form, explicitly alongside Ovid's epistolary elegies (1588). See also Baldwin, *small Latine*, Vol. 2, 590-593.

[144] Cicero, "De Amicitia," *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*, vol. 20, trans. William Armistead Falconer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923) 188. "*Efficiat paene unum ex duobous*." Tenets such as these become the basis for theories of friendship in the early modern period, supplemented by Aristotle and Plutarch and emphasized primarily in *De Amicitia* but also in other educational works, such as Erasmus' adages and Elyot's *Boke Named the Governour*.

[145] Ibid.

[146] See, for example, *Tristia* 1.5, 1.9, 4.4, 4.5, 5.4, and 5.9. Theseus as a model friend appears in 1.5, 1.9, and 5.4. Orestes and Pylades appear in 1.5, 1.9, 4.4, 5.4, and 5.6.

not safe to praise what you love to a friend, for once he believes your praise, he'll pursue her himself."[147] Ovid reiterates this later and advises, "flee those whom you credit faithful and you will be safe. Beware a dear friend and a close brother, for these are the sort who will bring you true fear."[148] Ovid questions conventional views of friendship, which alternatively value male-male relationships over male-female ones. Furthermore, in the 16th century, writers like Montaigne claimed that womankind "in no instance has yet succeeded in attaining [true friendship] and by the common agreement of the ancient schools is excluded from it."[149] Such relationships could even detract from a friendship between two men, as represented in literature and early modern *exempla*, such as Thomas Elyot's Titus and Gisippus story. Consequently, this conflict between the *Amores* and early modern friendship, or moreover, the *Tristia* arises in *The Two Gents*.

In *Two Gents* more than other plays, elegy pervades the plot, contextualizing characters and their choices in relation to friendship and love. "Dire lamenting elegies," for example, serve to "win" one's beloved (3.2.81), and the versified epistles exchanged by the lovers possess elegiac content as well as form.[150] In Act 2, scene 1, Valentine has "writ lines to one [whom Silvia] loves," and Speed asks him whether "they are not *lamely* writ" (2.1.80-84, italics mine). "Lamely," a common elegiac pun, refers to the genre's

[147] Ovid, "The Art of Love: I," *The Art of Love and Other Poems*, 62, ll.740-2. Translation mine.
[148] Ibid., 64, ll. 753-4.
[149] Montaigne, "On Friendship," *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 138. Furthermore, male-female relationships (friendships or otherwise) were considered inherently weaker or less pure than male-male ones. As Montaigne writes, "the ordinary capacity of women is inadequate for that communion and fellowship which is the nurse of this sacred bond; nor does their soul seem firm enough to endure the strain of so tight and durable a knot" (138).
[150] See Frederick Kiefer, "Love Letters in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*," *Shakespeare Studies* 18 (1986): 65-85. For other potential sources and their relevance to *Two Gents* see John A. Guinn, "The Letter Device in the First Act of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*," *Studies in English* 20 (1940): 72-81.

limping couplet, for the second line is one "foot" shorter than the first.[151] Speed is recycling this pun, effectively asking whether the letter is "writ in elegiac meter." Valentine humorously misunderstands, replying that he had not writ them lamely (i.e., poorly) but only "as well as [he] can do them" (2.1.85). Through scenes such as this and frequent allusion, Shakespeare signals elegy's importance in these young men's lives. Shakespeare, however, does not reduce these characters to static analogues of Ovidian *personae*. Rather, he provides, much like elegy, conflicted subjects: young men struggling between love and friendship and young women complaining of their abandonment. Proteus does not simply follow the *Amores*' promiscuous speaker, for example. Rather, he debates love and its Petrarchan conventions before embracing an Ovidian role. Likewise, Valentine begins a model friend, falters ethically as a "tutor in love," and attempts to repent in exile. *Two Gents*' women also look to this model, though they reveal its inadequacy more than anything else. When Proteus abandons Julia, she no longer functions as a Corinna figure but instead assumes Ariadne's role in the *Heroides*, abandoned by Theseus. Ultimately, however, this model does not provide a permanent solution, only a temporary guise. In this way, these characters struggle with these ideas, and, as this struggle takes shape, they formulate themselves in an Ovidian manner.

Shakespeare establishes this scenario by positioning Proteus and Valentine in their education's final stage, when they begin applying their lessons and gathering experience. At the start of the play, both Valentine and Proteus have implicitly finished a general education. Julia, for example, had previously caused Proteus to "neglect [his]

[151] See *Amores* 3.1. Elegy's abstract embodiment has an endearing limp, and this imperfection was part of her charm. Notably, *Amores* 1.1 has a related joke wherein Cupid steals a foot away from the speaker, changing epic verse to elegiac.

studies" (1.1.67).[152] In Act 3, scene 1, Proteus' father, Antonio, decides his son's next step. Pantino suggests that Proteus should "spend his time no more at home" (1.3.14) while other men "put forth their sons to seek preferment out — / some to the wars to try their fortune there; / Some to discover islands far away; / Some to the studious universities" (1.3.7-10). Antonio decides that Proteus should travel abroad for further education, where he may be "tried and tutored in the world" (1.3.21). By traveling, he will achieve "experience" and will be "perfected," i.e., fully formed (1.3.22-23). Antonio also is sending Proteus to Valentine, who sought Milan while journeying "to see the wonders of the world abroad" (1.1.6). Travel, experience, and application form these youths' next stage of education, while similarly aged youths seek war, exploration, or university. Of course, Proteus and Valentine are not leaving England, but Shakespeare projects English custom upon a suspect depiction of Verona, which requires a ship to reach Milan. As scholars have already noted, this departure instead mirrors a London departure for an educational tour.[153] Within this context, both characters also face the educational stage following upper school, when students first read elegy. Now, these two adolescents apply their knowledge, following Ovid's model of self-presentation as they face ideological conflict.

Neither character necessarily starts by modeling Ovid. Rather, one begins as an apparently typical lover and the other a good friend. Their different predilections,

[152] For a brief but comprehensive account of the role of education in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* see Peter Lindenbaum, "Education in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 15, no. 2 (1975): 229-244. Lindenbaum argues that the play is not organized about the clash between ideals of friendship and love but rather the general moral education of Proteus.
[153] See Lindenbaum 1975; Thomas A. Perry, "Proteus, Wry-Transformed Traveller," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1954): 33-40.

however, preview the conflict that develops in the play. "Were't not affection chains thy tender days / to the sweet glances of thy honoured love," Valentine remarks in the opening scene, "I rather would entreat thy company to see the wonders of the world abroad / than … wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness" (1.1.3-8). Valentine does not phrase Proteus' two options as merely remaining home and going abroad. When Valentine wishes that Proteus "see the wonders of the world abroad," he desires it in Proteus' "company" or companionship. In contrast, at home Valentine's "tender days" are chained to the "sweet glances of [his] honoured love." Valentine's phrasing of Proteus' choice pits male-male travel against male-female idleness. Already, Shakespeare establishes the play's central conflict — the priority of sex-based relationships. As both Proteus and Valentine begin modelling themselves on Ovid's *Amores* and *Tristia*, these works' themes encourage this conflict.

Proteus begins imitating an Ovidian model before any other character, and Shakespeare gives him elegiac qualities to invoke this context. Even his name, which alludes to the shape-shifting god, invokes Ovid. When Proteus remarks in Act 1, "Julia, thou hast *metamorphosed* me," Shakespeare describes how love has changed his values but also references Proteus' Ovidian origins (i.e., Ovid's *Metamorphoses*). In the *Metamorphoses*, the god Proteus frequently appears (books 2, 8, 11, and 13) and is known for his "changeable" (*ambiguum*) nature.[154] In book 8, for example, Ovid highlights Proteus' unique ability to change into many shapes and in this way he nearly elevates Proteus into the epic's representative figure. Shakespeare, however, focuses on

[154] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 60, l. 9.

Proteus' "changeful" disposition in love. In early modern England, the word "change" commonly denoted infidelity,[155] and Proteus accumulates a lusty association through Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, in which he rapes Florimel.[156] Likely, this association derives from the *Ars Amatoria*, in which Ovid uses Proteus to exemplify the "changeful" lover. After cautioning men to beware their friends, Ovid advises they also imitate Proteus by "changing shape" to catch different mistresses.[157] Proteus' changeful nature resembles Ovid's nature in the *Amores*, wherein he brags that he loves all women and betrays his beloved Corinna for her handmaid, among others. The subtext around Julia, who is Proteus' mistress, confirms his elegiac origins. As critics have noted, early modern poets frequently use "Julia" as a name for the beloved.[158] They neglect, however, the name's origins: the *Amores*. Corinna was credited as a pseudonym for Augustus' daughter, Julia the Elder, and this information prefaced Ovid's works, including schoolboys' editions.[159] Consequently, in this analogue, Shakespeare establishes Proteus as an *Amores*-like lover, who is "changeful" like Proteus in the *Ars*.

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[155] This is best demonstrated in Donne's elegy, "Change." Subsequently, Julia uses the word to characterize Proteus' actions in Act 4, scene 2. See 4.2.67. In this scene the Host remarks on the "fine change" in the music, to which Julia replies, "Ay, that change is the spite." The pun becomes explicit in the following line, in which the Host asks "You would have them always play but one thing?" A similar remark is made at the end of the play when Julia reveals herself and states that "it is the lesser blot, modest find, / Women to change their shapes than men their minds" (5.4.106-7).

[156] See William O. Scott, "Proteus in Spenser and Shakespeare: The Lover's Identity," *SSt* (1965): 283-293.

[157] Ovid, "The Art of Love: I," 64, l. 761.

[158] The name is popularized by some of the best neo-Latin love elegies of the period by Johannes Secundus. For an excellent edition with translations, see Paul Murgatroyd, *The Amatory Elegies of Johannes Secundus* (Leiden: Brill 2000).

[159] The edition of Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson, located at Emmanuel College, had such introductions, and in his *Poetaster*, the character of Ovid even has a mistress in the character of Julia. Jonson's edition includes several introductions to Ovid's works. One by Pietro Crinito, for example, remarks that "Many believe [Ovid's exile] to have come forth from adultery with Julia, daughter of Augustus." Another introduction in the same edition by Lilio Gregorio Giraldi cites Sidonius Apollinaris who "seemingly intimates Julia by the false name" of Corinna, describing Corinna as the daughter of Caesar. Ovid, *Opera Omnia* (London, 1656), accessed August 2, 2017, Early English Books Online. Translations mine.

Although Proteus begins as a typical lover, his attraction to Silvia eventually reveals his Ovidian nature. In the first few scenes, his name only foreshadows his future infidelity. There are a few elegiac echoes, but otherwise Proteus appears a faithful, even Petrarchan, lover.[160] After Proteus meets Silvia, however, his "changeful" and elegiac nature grows explicit:

> Even as one heat another heat expels,
> Or as one nail by strength drives out another,
> So the remembrance of my former love
> Is by a newer object quite forgotten.
> . . . . . .
> She is fair; and so is Julia that I love—
> That I did love, for now my love is thaw'd;
> Which, like a waxen image, 'gainst a fire,
> Bears no impression of the thing it was. (2.4.189-192, 196-99)

In the monologue's opening lines, Proteus muses how his affection has suddenly and utterly changed. Each of Proteus' metaphors describe Julia as physically removed from him. A new love "expels" her and "drives out" her memory. As such, this new love appears forceful, and Julia is thus "*quite* forgotten." His sudden inconstancy recalls the *Amores*' "changeful" lover, and his final remark on her expulsion echoes his own Protean nature: his love, a moldable "waxen image," changes shape due to his affection's "fire." Unlike the Petrarchan lover with complete devotion to one mistress, Proteus' love changes quickly and utterly upon discovering a "newer object." Much like the lover of

[160] The idea of a poet-lover being servant to Love or the beloved (the elegiac *servitium amoris*) is one of these, cited first when Valentine teases Proteus for his newfound feelings: "Love is your master, for he masters you" (1.1.39). In the same passage, however, there are also some specifically elegiac references. Valentine likewise teases Proteus for elegiac *paraclausithyra* (amatory vigils in which the lover is separated from the beloved by closed doors), describing them as "twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights" (1.1.30-31).

Ovid's *Amores*, who balances or switches lovers as if a *desultor amoris* (an equestrian "trick-rider" in love), Proteus transitions from one beloved to the next.

Significantly, the cause that he cites for this sudden change (Valentine's praise) also establishes him as an elegiac lover. If it is not Proteus' "eye" that has provoked his change, instead, he thinks, it must be "Valentine's praise" (2.4.193). This suggestion recalls Ovid's warnings in the *Ars* that "it is not safe to praise what you love to a friend, for once he believes your praise, he'll pursue her himself." Proteus effectively becomes this hypothetical friend, believing Valentine's praise and seeking to "compass" Silvia. Ovid's other warning in this passage, that "friendship and constancy are but names," likewise becomes apparent. Proteus calls his inconstancy to both Julia and Valentine a "false transgression" and marvels that

> my zeal to Valentine is cold,
> And that I love him not as I was wont.
> O, but I love his lady too too much,
> And that's reason I love him so little. (2.4.200-3)

Now that he believes Valentine's praise and has seen Silvia's beauty, his "zeal" and faith toward Valentine diminishes. His increasing love for Silvia decreases his love toward Valentine. Pursuing Silvia, he knows, would be "erring" against friendship, but he still desires "to compass her with [his] skill."

Eventually, Proteus follows Ovid's *Amores* by declaring Valentine his elegiac rival. By Act 2, scene 6, Proteus grows more willing to abandon his friend. Before deciding to betray Valentine, Proteus considers which relationships he should keep:

> Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose;
> If I keep them, I needs must lose myself.

If I lose them, thus find I by their loss,
For Valentine, myself, for Julia, Silvia.
I to myself am dearer than a friend,
For love is still most precious in itself. (2.6.19-24)

In these lines, Proteus reverses the language of friendship. Whereas at the beginning of the play, Proteus feared that he would lose himself and friends to love ("I leave myself, my friends and all, for love" (1.1.65)), now he fears that he will lose himself without it. He accepts that he will lose Valentine, who no longer seems to be Proteus' "second self." In the following line, Proteus even rejects this principle. The dictum that "No man should love himself more than his friend"[161] now becomes "I to myself am dearer than a friend." Finalizing his conclusion, Proteus declares, "I will forget that Julia is alive, / remembering that my love to her is dead. / And Valentine I'll hold an enemy, aiming at Silvia as my sweeter friend" (2.6.27-30). Recalling the *Ars*' advice that a lover should beware friends, Proteus declares his best friend his "enemy." Accepting his "changeful" disposition, Proteus also accepts elegy's stance toward male-male relationships. Valentine becomes a threat to him, one that could obstruct his pursuit of Silvia. He becomes an "enemy," an elegiac *rivalis* or *hostis*.[162]

Whereas Proteus gradually transitions from a conventional lover to one modelled after Ovid in the *Amores*, Valentine shifts more quickly and frequently. He begins a true friend, becomes an elegiac lover, and repents as an elegiac exile. Whereas Valentine's

[161] John Bodenham, *Bodenham's Belvedere or the Garden of the Muses* (1600), 96, quoted in in Carroll, *Two Gents*, 197n23.
[162] *Rivalis* is the conventional terminology but *hostis* is occasionally used, especially with the *militia amoris* motif. Thus, in *Amores* 1.9.18, Ovid declares that a lover "keeps eyes upon his rival as on a foeman." Ovid, "Amores," *Heroides - Amores*, trans. Grant Showerman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 357.

first speech previews his preference for friendship, he has abandoned this opinion when he returns to the stage. Later, he will once again favor male-male companionship, but in Act 2, scene 4, he begins his transition to elegiac love. Proteus remarks that his "tales of love were wont to weary [Valentine]" and that he knows Valentine "joy[s] not in a love discourse" (2.4.124-5). In reply, however, Valentine reveals his sudden change, "Ay, Proteus, but that life is altered now. / I have done penance for contemning Love" (2.4.126-7). He then praises Silvia, declaring her incomparable, and the roles of the opening scene suddenly reverse. Proteus now deflates and counters Valentine's statements about love. Their exchange slowly grows contentious as the dialogue proceeds. Proteus asks "Have I not reason to prefer mine own [mistress]?" and criticizes Valentine's "braggartism" (2.4.154, 162). Valentine responds by asking for pardon and implying love's priority: "Forgive me that I do not dream on thee, / because thou seest me dote upon my love" (2.6.170-171). When Valentine next takes the stage (Act 3, scene 1), he explicitly declares his elegiac love.

Like Lucentio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Valentine chooses to "follow the path of *ars amatoria*" and becomes Ovid's "tutor of love."[163] In classical literature, this "tutor of love" or *praeceptor amoris* prescribes rules and gives advice for lovers. All three canonical Roman elegists occasionally assume this role in their collections, advising friends, acquaintances, or mistresses. In the *Ars*, Ovid expands this role, writing all three books from this perspective and prescribing rules for love. In England, this role is frequently translated as "love's tutor," and Shakespeare uses similar terminology in *Two*

[163] See Patricia Parker, "Construing Gender: Mastering Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew*," in *The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies*, ed. Dympna Callaghan (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 193-209. See also Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 99.

Gents. In Act 2, scene 1, for example, Speed identifies how Silvia has manipulated Valentine into writing his "lame" love letter. "My master sues her," Speed says, "and she hath taught her suitor, / He being her pupil, to become her tutor" (2.1.127-8). These lines not only invoke Valentine's transition but echo elegies such as Donne's "Loves Pupil" and *Tibullus* 1.6, in which the beloved supplants the conventionally male lover as love's tutor.

Later, when the Duke tricks Valentine into revealing his elopement, Valentine completely assumes this role, adapting Ovid's advice. After hearing that Valentine intends to steal away with Silvia, the Duke pretends that he has his own lady who "naught esteems his aged eloquence" (3.1.83), explaining, "Now therefore would I have thee to my *tutor* / … How and which way I may bestow myself / To be regarded in her sun-bright eye" (3.1.84, 87-8, emphasis mine). Valentine replies with a short elegy, written even in heroic couplets, the typical English meter for elegiac distichs and the only such passage in the entire play, including monologues. As love's tutor, Valentine borrows from the *Ars*, citing its advice to the Duke:

> VAL: Dumb jewels often in their silent kind
> More than quick words do move a woman's mind.
> DUKE: But she did scorn a present that I sent her.
> VAL: A woman sometime scorns what best contents her.
> Send her another; never give her o'er,
> For scorn at first makes after-love the more.
> If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
> But rather to beget more love in you.
> If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone,
> Forwhy the fools are mad if left alone.
> Take no repulse, whatever she doth say,
> For 'Get you gone' she doth not mean 'Away!'
> Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces;
> Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces.
> That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man

If with his tongue he cannot win a woman. (3.1.90-105)

Many of these lines derive from Ovid's *Ars,* including his advice that one should give gifts, that gifts are better than words, that women hide desires, that a woman should be praised for everything, and that one should convert flaws into compliments, even when that flaw is a "black" complexion. Valentine expresses elegy's view of love, the purpose of which is to "win" or persuade a woman, but he also expresses its misogynistic basis, undermining the woman's agency in the relationship and prioritizing male desire. Valentine's speech blatantly identifies his elegiac model but it does so briefly, since by the scene's end Valentine faces banishment.

When the Duke exiles Valentine, Valentine reasonably imitates the next most logical model in repentance: Ovid's *Tristia*. After this speech, the Duke discovers a rope ladder and letter upon Valentine's person, revealing his intentions for Silvia. The Duke angrily responds, banishing Valentine from Milan. Like Ovid, who was exiled for his *Ars* and pursuit of the emperor's daughter, Valentine is exiled after tutoring in love and for pursuing the Duke's daughter. Shakespeare even accidentally confirms the connection, referring to the Duke as "Emperor" (1.3.27) and Silvia as an "empress" (5.4.139).[164] During the Duke's decree, Shakespeare also adapts Ovid's admonition in *Tristia* 3.4 not to be, as he

[164] See also 2.3.4 and 2.4.74-5. Explanations for the Duke's conflation with an emperor have been otherwise dissatisfying. Bond suggests Shakespeare is merely being loose with titles (Arden 1st edition, 18). Brooks thinks that Shakespeare adapts the term "empress' love" from Montemayor's *Diana* and expands it when referring to the Duke (Arden 2nd edition, xxxi). Most likely, Shakespeare is adapting Ovid's biography, which Montemayor also adapts in *Diana*. The princess in *Diana*, for example, is even named Augusta Caesarina. Finally, Leech (Arden 2nd edition, xv-xxi) suggests the conflation to be a sign of revision, which may be the case. Quoted in Carroll, 133n1.

himself was, like "Merops' son," Phaeton.[165] The Duke scolds Valentine: "Why, Phaeton, for thou art Merops' son, / Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car, / And with thy daring folly burn the world?" (3.1.153-55). Both Ovid and Valentine, in exile, are compared to Phaeton for reaching beyond their lot. After the Duke's decree, Valentine reveals his new model in a soliloquy. In the poem preceding Ovid's admonition, Ovid wishes, in a letter to his wife, that he had died rather than face exile. Now, Valentine wishes the same: "And why not death rather than living torment? / To die is to be banished from myself, / And Silvia is myself; banished from her / Is self from self—a deadly banishment" (3.1.170-173). When Proteus enters the stage following this soliloquy, he too knows how Valentine should react. Falsely consoling his friend, he urges Valentine to write letters from exile: "Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence" (3.1.246). He proposes that Valentine follow Ovid's *Tristia* by writing letters.

In the final scene, however, Proteus' Ovidian lover clashes with Valentine's Ovidian exile. As Proteus' conflict progresses, he reveals its moral deficiencies. In particular, when Proteus fails to persuade Silvia through oratory, as elegy promotes, he turns to physical force and attempts to rape her. The rhetoric of love elegy, which most frequently advertises its persuasive utility, is frequently suggestive in this regard. Common assertions, which Valentine repeats in 3.1, are that women conceal their desire and that a man should act to the

[165] Ovid, "Tristia: Book III," 117. In this poem, Ovid warns a friend not to make the same mistakes as he did. "Let me tell thee," he says, "he who hides well his life, lives well; each man ought to remain within his proper position" (3.4.25-26). He follows with several analogues, including, "Merops would not have seen his son in flames nor his daughters in the form of trees if he had been an adequate father for Phaethon. Do thou also dread constantly that which is too lofty and furl the sails of thy intent" (3.4.29-32).

contrary. The danger of these assumptions culminates in Ovid's *Ars* when it is transformed into an explicit advocacy for rape:

> You may call it force; that force is pleasing to girls. They often desire to give what they enjoy against their will. Whoever is suddenly taken by violent plunder of their love is pleased and deems the impudence a service. But she who leaves untouched when she might have been forced will become distraught.[166]

Proteus, following similarly horrifying reasoning, turns to force in the final scene. When Silvia refuses his advances, he declares, "If the gentle spirit of moving words / Can no way change you to a milder form, / I'll woo you like a soldier, at arm's end, / And love you 'gainst the nature of love — force ye" (5.4.55-58). Frustrated by his inability to persuade her, Proteus turns to "force." His actions as an Ovidian lover already have been condemnable, but now he has gone too far.

Valentine replies by condemning Proteus' action and, although Silvia has been attacked, lamenting Proteus' betrayal of their friendship. No longer the "tutor in love," he once again values friendship over love. Echoing the *Tristia*'s poems which scold treacherous friends, Valentine laments his betrayal:

> Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,
> For such is a friend now! Treacherous man,
> Thou hast beguiled my hopes. Naught but mine eye
> Could have persuaded me. Now I dare not say
> I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.
> Who should be trusted, when one's right hand
> Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,
> I am sorry I must never trust thee more,
> But count the world a stranger for thy sake.
> The private wound is the deepest. O time most accurst,

[166] Ovid, "The Art of Love: I," 62. 1.673-8.

'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst! (5.4.62-72)

Valentine's arrival prevents Proteus' crime, and his lecture is intended to rebuke him morally. Rather than Silvia's well-being, however, Valentine cares more about his friend's betrayal. He may call Proteus a "treacherous man" but he does so because Proteus has betrayed his "trust," has "perjured" his oaths," and become his "foe." He becomes fixated on friendship and does not mention Silvia once. In this scene, Proteus' sexual love clashes with Valentine's friendship. Shakespeare seemingly establishes Valentine's friendship as the ethical alternative, but Valentine's neglect of Silvia remains suspect.

Valentine's neglect continues in his subsequent lines, and both Proteus and Valentine appear dubious, having taken their roles to the extreme. After Valentine's lament, Proteus makes a brief, apology, which Valentine accepts; however, its brevity and, moreover, Valentine's willingness to forgive, disturbs audiences and readers. Even more upsetting, after pining for Silvia all this time, Valentine offers her to Proteus. Proteus condemns himself, admits his guilt, and asserts his sorrow, and thus Valentine replies,

> Then I am paid,
> And once again I do receive thee honest.
> Who by repentance is not satisfied
> Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased;
> By penitence th'Eternal's wrath's appeased.
> And that my love may appear plain and free,
> All that was mine in Silvia I give thee. (5.4.77-83)[167]

[167] The final line of this speech, "All that was mine in Silvia I give thee," has received substantial attention. Most dissatisfaction with the play's ending boils down to this line. Productions occasionally cut it, and critics debate whether Valentine is actually bestowing Silvia. For a recent article with substantial bibliography on the subject see, Eric Hyman, "Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona 5.4.83," *The Explicator* 64, no. 4 (2010): 198-201.

If Shakespeare makes an ethical assertion in this scene, he suggests that men ought to prioritize friendships; however, Valentine's decision, even embedded in early modern misogyny, appears suspect. The Titus and Gisippus story echoes especially loud in this scene, wherein the beloved is also bestowed upon a friend, but even in this story, the friend does not attack her first.[168] Throughout the play, Julia has suffered Proteus' "changeful" love. Now, in the play's climax, Silvia suffers Valentine's fidelity to Proteus.

Although Shakespeare seemingly endorses Valentine's misogyny, Silvia's silence and the audience's growing discomfort actually subverts this "morality." In fact, throughout the play, Julia's and Silvia's roles problematize Valentine's and Proteus' ideologies. The identities that Julia and Silvia assume often shift with the mens', and when Julia actively constructs an identity, she does so temporarily (both as a page and as the *Heroides*' Ariadne). However, when Silvia and Julia express their thoughts in the play, they frequently undermine the elegiac roles that Proteus and Valentine imitate. They provide the other side of Shakespeare's examination of Ovidian self-presentation, *in utramque partem*. Shakespeare achieves this effect by "dramatically" expanding the little space that exists for the elegiac mistress. In the *Amores*, Ovid writes from his own perspective, and Corinna's thoughts are only portrayed in reported speech, if ever at all. For example, *Amores* 1.4 conveys Ovid's instructions for an affair, *Amores*

[168] Thomas Elyot's *Boke named the Governour* proposes the story of Titus and Gisippus as an *exemplum*, a tale featuring two friends who fall in love with the same woman, Sophronia. After Gisippus takes Sophronia as his own, Titus falls into a deadly despair; however, Gisippus' friendship with Titus is greater than his love for Sophronia, so he promises her to him and arranges a bed-trick to prompt their marriage.

1.10 an expostulation, and *Amores* 1.14 his complaint about her dyed hair. He addresses each poem to Corinna, but the reader never gets her reply. The conclusions of these poems leave the readers to judge the elegies' persuasiveness and to imagine the mistress' reactions. In contrast, Shakespeare's dramatic form bestows the mistresses with speech, which gauges and often subverts Proteus' and Valentine's actions.

Julia, for example, begins as a conventional elegiac mistress. Her name invokes Ovid's beloved of the *Amores,* and she first appears on stage to read fragments of Proteus' versified love letter. In Act 2, scene 7, Julia expresses her belief that Proteus remains faithful and sincere; however, it immediately follows the soliloquy in which he concedes to infidelity. When Lucetta worries that Proteus "will scarce be pleased" with Julia's journey, Julia replies:

> A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears,
> And instances of infinite of love
> Warrant me welcome to my Proteus.
> . . . . . .
> His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,
> His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate,
> His tears pure messengers sent from his heart,
> His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth. (2.7.69-71, 75-78)

These lines, however, immediately follow Proteus' dismissal of his oaths:

> And Silvia — witness heaven that made her fair —
> Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiope.
> I will forget that Julia is alive,
> Remembering that my love to her is dead. (2.6.25-28)

Whereas in elegy, the promiscuous elegist's perspective may be the only one heard, in *Two Gents,* Julia's speech garners sympathy. After Proteus renounces his oaths to Julia, Julia's insistence on Proteus' fidelity reveals his decision's

consequences. Her crescendoing list of his supposedly virtuous qualities increases the audience's sympathy for her as the dramatic irony emphasizes Proteus' corruption. By juxtaposing these scenes, Shakespeare not only foreshadows the upcoming conflict caused by Julia's departure but also the effects of Proteus' "change." Her speech, by invoking an audience's sympathy, ironically undermines Proteus' "changeful" nature.

Later, Julia assumes a role from Ovid's *Heroides* that is similarly subversive. After discovering her abandonment, she imitates Ariadne, a lamenting mistress in Ovid's *Heroides*. In Act 4, scene 4, Proteus sends Julia, now disguised as a page, to woo Silvia. Upon receiving Proteus' love tokens, Silvia expresses pity for Julia and, perhaps suspicious, asks that the "page" describe her. Julia gives several replies, including a description of her height. She was "about my stature," Julia says, "for at Pentecost, / When all our pageants of delight were played, / Our youth got me to play the woman's part" (4.4.156-158). Julia continues,

> And at that time I made her weep a-good,
> For I did play a lamentable part.
> Madam, 'twas Ariadne, passioning
> For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight,
> Which I so lively acted with my tears
> That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,
> Wept bitterly; and would I might be dead
> If I in thought felt not her very sorrow. (4.4.163-170)

In these lines, Julia recalls *Heroides* 10, an elegy that features Ariadne's lamentation following Theseus' abandonment, and sympathizes with the figure. When she remarks "would I might be dead / If I in thought felt not her very

sorrow," the ambiguous pronoun likely refers to her supposed mistress (Julia), which is of course herself. It is a joke. But "her," in these lines, can also refer to Ariadne, and the audience is meant to recognize their parallel situations. Both Julia and Ariadne have left their homes, only to be abandoned by their lovers, and Proteus, an analogue with Theseus, is implicitly criticized for his "perjury." Rather than an Ovidian model by which Julia can formulate her identity, the *Heroides* provide her a "lamentable part," a *persona* that she assumes much like her disguise, that momentarily serves to undermine Proteus. Thus, the *Heroides* function, like the *Tristia*, as an ethical counterpoint to the *Amores*.

In contrast with Julia, Silvia subverts Ovidian eroticism less frequently and more directly. She, too, begins the play as an elegiac mistress, a clever one, like Ovid's Corinna, who tricks Valentine into writing her an elegy. Silvia, however, more explicitly rejects Proteus' actions than Julia, calling him a "subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man" (4.2.92) and criticizing his "changing thoughts" (4.4.117). In the final scene, her criticism blatantly guides the audience's interpretation of the *Amores*-like lover:

> Thou hast no faith left now, unless thou'dst two,
> And that's far worse than none; better have none
> Than plural faith, which is too much by one.
> Thou counterfeit to thy true friend! (5.4.50-53)

Silvia criticizes the "plurality" of Proteus' faith, remarking on his inconstancy toward both Julia and Valentine. She explicitly identifies how he has perjured "a thousand oaths" to Julia (5.4.48) and appears "counterfeit" next to his "true

friend," Valentine. Whereas Julia usually subverts by irony, Silvia directly comments on Proteus' decisions.

Perhaps even more importantly, however, Shakespeare also adapts the elegiac mistress' silence as a subversive strategy. Shakespeare does this twice, once for Julia and once for Silvia. In Act 2, scene 2, for example, Proteus and Julia say farewell, declaring their vows. Proteus declares his fidelity, remarking,

> Here is my hand for my true constancy.
> And when that hour o'erslips me in the day
> Wherein I sigh not, Julia, for thy sake,
> The next ensuing hour some foul mischance
> Torment me for my love's forgetfulness.
> My father stays my coming; answer not.
> The tide is now - nay, not thy tide of tears,
> That tide will stay me longer than I should.
> Julia, farewell.
> What, gone without a word?
> Ay, so true love should do: it cannot speak,
> For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it. (2.2.8-18)

Proteus both implores Julia not to answer and marvels at her silence, "what, gone without a word?" As Proteus acknowledges in the subsequent lines, actions speak louder than words, and Julia's silent departure conveys her grief. Julia's reaction even shocks her lover, whom she briefly leaves speechless;[169] however, she also recalls the beloved's silence in elegies such as *Amores* 2.11, Ovid's own *propemptikon* or valediction as Corinna departs by sea. Whereas Ovid tries dissuading Corrina from leaving, Proteus tries persuading Julia of his constancy. In each instance, the audience or reader must infer the beloved's emotions. On stage, Julia's silent visage contrasts with Proteus' garrulous valediction. Does

[169] Proteus implies this before his exit when he remarks, "this parting strikes poor lovers dumb" (2.2.20).

Julia leave assured? If "true love … cannot speak," what does Proteus' long-winded vow signify? In this scene, conflict is foreshadowed. The audience knows that Proteus will soon be joining Valentine and that Valentine pursues Silvia. The lusty connotations of Proteus' name begin emerging, and as Julia silently exits the stage, she leaves the audience with an ominous feeling. They are left to wonder what will come of these vows.

Shakespeare adapts this subversive strategy in the final scene as well. After Proteus attempts to rape Silvia, Valentine offers the voice of reason; however, instead of criticizing Proteus' treachery to Silvia, he criticizes his treachery as a friend. Silvia's silence disrupts this resolution. The last words that Silvia speaks repel Proteus' advances. She remains on stage for the remainder of the play; however, she does not speak even once, while Valentine bestows her upon Proteus, Proteus reconciles with Julia, Turio claims her, and the Duke "gifts" her to Valentine. Like Julia in Proteus' farewell, Silvia remains silent. The stage action even draws attention to her. Turio exclaims "*Yonder* is Silvia, and Silvia is mine" (5.4.123, emphasis mine), and Valentine gestures, "*Here* she stands" (5.4.127, emphasis mine). Finally, the Duke declares, "take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her" (5.4.145). Each of these characters point back to Silvia, who remains speechless, never interjecting as they determine her fate. The final lines of *Two Gents* may insist on its concluding unity, "one feast, one house, one mutual happiness," but Silvia's reaction determines how the audience understands the scene. Productions often have Silvia run a gambit of emotions: fear at Proteus' assault, shock at Valentine's offer, and joy at the Duke's decision;

however, several productions deem these reactions unbecoming for the otherwise resolute Silvia. Such productions have Silvia and Julia exiting in unity and reasserting their autonomy.[170] Modern feminist intentions may color these re-stagings but they augment a pre-existing ambiguity in Silvia's silence. Rather than uncharacteristic complacence, her silence might better convey disbelief and skepticism. As an elegiac mistress, Silvia's exit would resemble the "imperfect" unions of *The Taming of the Shrew*'s "headstrong women" (5.2.130). Her dissatisfaction, like Bianca's and the Widow's shrewishness in the final scene, provides one last (potentially comic) irony — one that ultimately disrupts Valentine's "morality" and reveals how he has abandoned her, as Proteus abandoned Julia.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, lessons from Shakespeare's childhood education emerge as major elements of the play. Elegy, a genre appropriate for youth, prefaced his emergence into adolescence and demonstrated how Ovid's model could be used to craft an identity. Now an actor turned playwright, Shakespeare reflects on this utility of elegy, providing two young gentlemen, who leave home to apply their education, formulate their identities, and acquire experience. Proteus and Valentine follow Ovid's model quite literally, crafting themselves into elegiac lovers, "tutors in love," and repentant exiles; however, along the way elegy's various values clash. Shakespeare first shows the dangers of the *Amores* and *Ars*, echoing the warnings of Erasmus and others, but by the play's conclusion, Valentine's over-eager forgiveness causes him to abandon Silvia. Ovidian elegy, Shakespeare shows, may be a way to

[170] See Carroll (ed.), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 106-7.

fashion subjectivity, but its attitudes toward love and friendship — even those that appear moral — have consequences.

Out of school for nearly 10 years, Shakespeare likely explored this "change" of identity, not only as a reflection on his youth but as a reflection on his own career. He, like Proteus and Valentine, confronts transition, and Ovid, whose poems he read in upper school, serves as his model for self-presentation. Indeed, his use of Ovid and explicit invocations constitute his self-presentation as an Ovidian poet-playwright, a role he is delighted by but also grows increasingly disillusioned with. In *Two Gents*, which examines Ovidian self-presentation, Shakespeare seems satisfied with neither the jocund, immoral Ovid nor the serious, repentant Ovid. At the play's end, Shakespeare even seems to writes himself into a corner, disrupting the morally sanctioned conclusion. As Shakespeare begins using Ovid less explicitly, perhaps we witness not only the progression of Shakespeare's imitative skill but a growing caution in his identification with Ovid and a decreasing reliance on Ovid for self-presentation.

Whereas Ovid's elegies were important influences and were even flaunted in *Venus and Adonis* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, elegiac influences fade away in the Ovidian works that follow *Two Gents*, most notably *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These two plots, especially, rest precariously above the dangers and delights of Ovidian love, above tragedy and comedy. The few hints of Ovidian *personae* that surface in these works are drastically transformed. Ben Jonson still finds in Romeo and Juliet an Ovid and Julia for his *Poetaster*. He even adapts the balcony scene. But whereas Jonson's play ends with Ovid's exile, Romeo's banishment is only the third act. Instead, he follows Pyramus of the *Metamorphoses* to his death. In contrast, when the

two lovers of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* meet at the outskirts of town, we may fear the fates of Pyramus and Thisbe. Moreover, "change" (both the transformation of the *Metamorphoses* and infidelity of the *Amores*) threatens their love. But unlike Ovid, these lovers right themselves with little error. Theseus does not punish or exile Lysander for his transgressions with Hermia. Instead, he arranges a wedding. In these plays, Shakespeare begins reinventing Ovidian paradigms of self-presentation and he begins moving away from overt Ovidianism. By the time he writes *As You Like It*, Ovid's elegies are a touchstone only for Touchstone, who sits among Rosalind's goats, like "the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths."

Shakespeare grows disillusioned with the values of Ovid and the elegists in a way similar to Milton, with whom this dissertation will conclude. *Two Gents,* in some ways, is like the epigraph that concludes Milton's elegies—like the epigraphs that preface so many elegiac books—declaring the *nequitia* or worthlessness of a youth spent writing or reading elegies; however, in Milton's elegies, we will see how he transformed himself, much as we see Shakespeare, in his early plays, constructing a reputation as an Ovidian poet. In the *Two Gents,* Shakespeare dramatizes the process, but in the elegies of the period, we can see the process at work. Between Shakespeare and Milton, this elegiac self-presentation intensifies, appearing most notably in Ben Jonson, who writes the *Poetaster* and his own English elegies, and John Donne who, as we'll see in the next chapter, uses elegy not only to create a *persona* but to interrogate selfhood.

Chapter 3: Donne, the Sincere Poet

Interrogating Selfhood in John Donne's *Elegies*

> To jumble the love-poems thus together, as they appear jumbled in the great majority of manuscript collections, is to make clear the variety of moods and attitudes to which Donne gave expression and reminds us that a tone of conviction, an accent of truth, is characteristic of his love-poetry whatever mood it expresses. On aesthetic grounds we cannot say, for example, that 'A Valediction: forbidding Mourning' is more sincere than 'The Flea.' … Each expresses its mood with that lack of hesitation, or equivocation, that purity of tone, that gives sincerity to a work of art and makes it appear veracious, or imaginatively coherent.
> — Helen Gardner, "General Introduction" to *The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets of John Donne*

Sincerity, a common strand which Helen Gardner detects among the jumbled heaps of John Donne's poems, underlies much of the scholarship on his work, though sometimes latently. Scholars have commonly attributed sincerity — or "faithfulness to the self when expressing emotion"[171] — to Donne's poetry, and as early as 1921, T. S. Eliot identifies in Donne "a fidelity to thought and feeling" and, likewise, the "recreation of thought into feeling."[172] This praise for Donne's sincerity revolves around some of his most distinctive features, including elaborate conceits and Petrarchan departures whose originality and force communicate an authenticity of emotion. It also gravitates around Donne's idealistic love poems, though, as Gardner reminds us, "that tone of conviction" exists in "whatever mood [his love-poetry] expresses," including the cynical and erotic. Donne's sincerity has become one of the most arresting qualities of his corpus, in that, despite his seeming sincerity, he conveys so many contradictory voices and attitudes across his poems. The variety of these voices make Donne a prime example of the growing recognition, in early modern England, of the absence of a central self and of a

[171] Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence*, 1.
[172] T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt, 1975), 59-67, especially 63.

de-centered, fragmented "I."[173] Later in Donne's life, as Terry Sherwood argues, Donne regains confidence in a unified and centered self, stabilized by Christian vocation and community.[174] "Self-division," as Annabel Patterson describes it, distinguishes his early works,[175] and in these poems we find a "mass of contradictions," a series of "instantiations of subjectivity." For some, these contradictions make Donne all the more sincere, revealing the fragmented and contingent nature of the self, and through these conflicting voices, we may see Donne searching for a new sincerity.[176]

These statements about Donne's sincerity reflect modern definitions of the term, but early modern ideas of sincerity would have been a special concern for Donne too. During Donne's lifetime, sincerity was a relatively new concept, which developed alongside notions of inwardness and outwardness.[177] It first emerged in the early 1500s

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[173] Thomas Docherty, *John Donne, Undone* (New York, NY: Methuen & Co., 1986), 26. Thomas Docherty, who writes specifically on Donne's subjectivity, describes how after Copernicus in early modern England "selfhood, in the form of a series of self-identical 'I' or first-personal self-constructions, threatens to disintegrate" (38); Cf., Terry G. Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern England* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007).

[174] Docherty, *John Donne, Undone*, 38. Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern England*, 146. Sherwood is able to find this sense of self "integrated within a community of persons" in Donne's later career but he too still struggles to locate this within the early part of Donne's authorial career. He, like many other Donne critics, "wrestle[s] long and hard with unsettling elements in Donne's biography and temperament that foster contradiction and indeterminancy in a variety of literary forms."

[175] Annabel Patterson, "All Donne," *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 37-67, especially 42.

[176] For scholars such as Henri Peyre, Donne's various and "conflicting moods" make his authorial persona appear all the more "sincere." Henri Peyre, *Literature and Sincerity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 32-3. "[Donne] gave a new sincerity to poetry," Peyre writes, "[he] had at least two souls inhabiting his breast. His dramatic cynicism, which strikes a responsive chord in our serious and often humorless critics worshipful of wit, cannot be explained away as the mood of one period, which the poet would have outgrown to become a tragic lover haunted by death … Conflicting moods coexisted in him" (32-33). Richard Lanham's ideas of Renaissance sincerity, derived from Ovid's elegies, echo Peyre's. He claims that this inconsistency challenges "those who think identity, authorial or otherwise, is more substantial than it is" and reveals the fragmented nature of the self (27-28).

[177] For the development of inwardness in early modern England, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and the Theatre in the English Renaissance*.

from a religious context, denoting doctrinal purity,[178] but developed alongside humanism, the theatre, and the reformation to denote congruity between a person's external conduct and inner thoughts. Like our modern notions of sincerity, however, this congruity could be dissembled. Thus, sincerity reared its head in classical debates about the relationship between truth and representation and was involved explicitly in the scrutiny of religious beliefs and heresy, which extracted inner truths by extreme measures.[179] Courtiers, especially, were conscious of self-presentation and rhetorical concealment,—George Puttenham, for example, advocated that "to retaine the credit, and the profession" the courtier must "dissemble his conceits as well as his countenances, so as he never speake as he thinkes, or thinke as he speaks, and that in any matter of importance his words and his meaning very seldome meete,"[180]—and thus at the Court sincerity was cultivated.[181] For Donne, his Catholic upbringing and religious conversion, at the very least, would have raised anxieties about sincerity, subjecting him to intense scrutiny at an early age. Indeed, even in criticism Donne's late priestly vocation inspired claims of insincerity, and

[178] "Sincere, adj.". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.ezp2.lib.umn.edu/view/Entry/180053?redirectedFrom=sincere (accessed November 15, 2017).

[179] For sincerity's development in relation to England's religious schism, see Jane Tyler, "Torture, Truth, and the Arts," *The Rhetoric of Sincerity*, ed. Ernst van Alphen, Mieke Bal, and Carel Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 19-43. For selfhood and heresy in the Renaissance, see John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 21-40 and for sincerity and selfhood more generally, 103-122. For sincerity's role in theatre and prayer, see Ramie Targoff, "The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England," *Representations* 60 (Autumn 1997): 49-69.

[180] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesy*, 379.

[181] The anxiety regarding courtiers and their figuratively painted faces is well known. Castiglione, even, while discussing friendship in *The Courtier* muses quite cynically that "there are in our minds so many dennes and corners, that it is unpossible for the wit of man to know the dissimulations that lye lurking in them." Cited in Peter DeSaWiggins, *Donne, Castiglione, and the Poetry of Courtliness* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 116. Cf., Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Daniel Javitch (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002), 91.

in his verse letters to prospective patrons, Donne had to be quite conscious of apparent sincerity and self-presentation.[182]

Concerns of sincerity and subjectivity are intricately entangled with one another, and thus Donne's sincerity offers a unique window into his interrogation of the self, especially when he confronts feelings of conflict and contradiction. At the Inns of Court, Donne faced such a contradiction that manifested in his poetry. There, he and his peers continued their educations but faced a shortage of job opportunities; they simultaneously depended on the Court for preferment and held it in contempt, as Arthur Marotti and Achsah Guibbory have shown. This conflict is apparent in the composition of misogynist and cynical poems that rejected the Petrarchan poetry associated with the Court, as a form of protest. However, many of these authors, including Donne, also wrote poems in the vein of the Petrarchism that they reject. As I argue, in several of his elegies, where these Petrarchan and Ovidian attitudes clash, Donne's conceptions of the self become more visible. Indeed, Donne chooses to write elegy for not merely an Ovidian cynicism to counter Petrarchan idealism, as it has been framed, but also its facility in self-presentation, its performative qualities that allow him to explore, through sincerity, the relationship between an inner and outer self.[183] Whereas lyric poetry represents human

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[182] See David Aers and Gunter Kress, "Darke Texts Needs Notes': Versions of Self in Donne's Verse Letters," in *Literature, Language and Society in England: 1580-1680*, ed. D. Aers, B. Hodge, and G. Kress (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1981), 23-48, especially 30.

[183] For Donne's knowledge of the elegists see Alan Armstrong, "The Apprenticeship of John Donne: Ovid and the Elegies," *ELH* 44, no. 3 (1977): 419-442; Stella Revard, "Donne and Propertius: Love and Death in London and Rome"; A. J. Peacock, "Donne's Elegies and Roman Love Elegy," *Hermathena* 119 (1975): 20-29; A. LaBranche, "'Blanda Elegeia': The Background to Donne's 'Elegies,'" *The Modern Language Review* 61, no. 3 (1966): 357-68; and Carey, "The Ovidian Love Elegy in England." General background for Donne's elegies can be located in James Blair Leishman, *The Monarch of Wit: An Analytical and Comparative Study of the Poetry of John Donne*, (London: Hutchinson, 1951), especially 52-87; Arthur Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986). And for Ovid's role in Petrarchism and Donne's lyrics, see Marotti, "'Love is not love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order," *ELH* 49 (1982): 396-428; Achsah Guibbory, "'Oh, let mee not serve so':The Politics of

consciousness, elegy conveys an external presentation of the self and its implicit relationship to inner thoughts, more similar to drama.[184] Indeed, Tibullus and Propertius are well-known for cultivating a sense of sincerity through their style and rhetoric, although Propertius notably plays off this sincerity to create a sense of irony (especially through his mythological analogues). Most notable are Ovid's innovations with sincerity. Eyeing the gap between internal and external self, he revels in the possibility of fake sincerity and, to some, seems even more sincere by creating a *persona* who acts and role-plays within various rhetorical situations.

Donne can be seen experimenting with similar forms of sincerity but, as I argue, he expands on the elegists' experiments to probe paradoxical experiences of the self. In several of his elegies, Donne uses elegy's performative nature to combine contrary Petrarchan and Ovidian attitudes, revealing the inner desires of a speaker that contradict his outward expression. However, despite this contradiction, the outward expression in these poems still appear sincere. He unifies these conflicting dimensions in an unreconciled paradox like that which he and his peers felt at the Inns of Court. This strategy, which Donne employs in "On his Mistris" and "The Autumnall," has led scholars to debate the speakers' attitudes toward love in these elegies. The elegy "On his Mistris," for example, features a poet-lover imploring his beloved to remain home while he goes abroad. It has been called "the most beautiful of all Donne's elegies" for its

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Love in Donne's *Elegies*," *ELH* 57 (1990): 811-33; and Jim Ellis, *Sexuality and Citizenship: Metamorphosis in Elizabethan Erotic Verse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

[184] Katharine Maus, famously, sees the outer self frequently belying the inward self in early modern drama. Donne too is interested in this dramatic or performative nature of elegy. However, in several of his elegies, he uses this nature to emphasize not the "estrangement of internal truth from external manifestation," as Maus writes, but the possibility of sincere contradiction. Maus, *Inwardness*, 35.

tender sentiment, and some critics declare the mistress to be Donne's beloved Anne More.[185] However, in this same poem, xenophobic and lascivious attitudes perturb readers.[186] Authors such as Arthur Marotti and Stanley Fish try reconciling these statements as "affectionate teasing" or even fright at his beloved's "metamorphosing into a boy."[187] In "The Autumnall," like "On his Mistris," critics privilege the "gallant" or complimentary nature through which a speaker defends his love of a middle-aged beauty. This attitude convinces Izaak Walton (and many later critics) that the beloved is Magdalene Herbert.[188] However, since the 1970s, more critics have focused on "particularly daring" and "frankly erotic" innuendos.[189] In both poems, these inconsistencies leave readers uncertain how to perceive the speaker's attitude toward love, but that uncertainty, I argue, is the point, for Donne interrogates the possibility of a unified self despite its contradictions. The speaker of "On his Mistris" embraces both

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[185] Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's*, Vol. 1 (Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1959), 151. Gill connects the poem's "sincerity" to Donne's general "sincerity of style. A scrupulous fidelity to the emotion he is communicating." Jha speaks to "the lovers' protestation of sincerity to each other." Roma Gill, "*Musa Iocosa Mea*: Thoughts on the *Elegies*," in *John Donne: Essays in Celebration*, Ed. A. J. Smith (London: Methuen & Co., 1972), 47-72, especially 72; Mohan Jha, *The Phoenix Riddle: An Interpretation and Critical Treatment of Donne's Love Poems*. (New Delhi: Arya Book Depot, 1972), 96-97.

[186] Anthony Low astutely summarizes the poem's most peculiarly attractive quality: "'On his Mistris' reveals the stirrings of a different and more tender attitude toward love, although still an abundance of desperate cynicism" (471). Low, "Donne and the Reinvention of Love," *English Literary Renaissance* 20, no. 3 (1990): 465-486.

[187] Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet*, 65. Stanley Fish, "Masculine Persuasive Force," *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-century English Poetry*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 223-252, especially 233.

[188] Several manuscript titles suggest that the addressee is M. Herbert, though most are of a more unreliable tradition: HH1, H6, C9, and B40. Numerous scholars have accepted Herbert as the addressee. See, for example, Leishman, *The Monarch of Wit*, 95; Frank J. Warnke, *John Donne*, Twayne's English Authors Series 444, (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1987). As late as 1987, Warnke claims that "modern scholars accept Walton's assertion" (62). Gardner accepts the possibility the poem is addressed to Herbert, characterizing "The Autumnall" as a "gallant poem of compliment" (254). Helen Gardner (ed), *The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

[189] Edmund Miller, "John Donne," in *Critical Survey of Poetry*, ed. Frank N. Magill, Vol. 2 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1982), 821-838, especially 829.

fidelity and lasciviousness while the speaker of "The Autumnall" both loves and is ashamed of his middle-aged lover. In these contradictions, Donne has adapted the figure of the paradox into a conception of the self. Donne's paradoxical self is one that acknowledges its polarities and integrates them; it confronts opposite sides of its nature and reconciles them by yielding, asserting, and incorporating them according to the situation.[190] This conception of the self, in Donne's elegies "The Autumnall" and "On his Mistris," reflects his own conflicted experience at that time and, for Donne, is ultimately more sincere.

Donne's pursuit of this sincerity was inspired by conflict at the Inns of Court where he wrote these poems. At Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple, Middle Temple, and Gray's Inn, young men continued their education and met others with similar aspirations. Such aspirations included preferment and professional advancement, made possible by the Inns' close connections to the city and Court. Here, with Elizabeth as queen, Petrarchan relationships resembled courtly politics: a "chaste, unattainable, superior woman, desired and sought by an admiring, subservient, faithful male suitor."[191] Thus, Petrarchism became associated with the Court, and men at the Inns, who desired preferment, composed sonnets as both entertainment and social capital. In Elizabeth's later years, however, competition grew fierce at the Inns and career prospects declined.

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[190] Reading Milton's *Prolusion* 6, in which he speaks seriously (*serio*) in praise of jocularity (*iocos*), Mary Ann Radzinowicz suggests a similar desire on Milton's part to "fuse" paradoxical experience, the "*Allegro*" and "*Il Penseroso*." See Mary Ann Radzinowicz, "'To Play in the Socratic Manner': Oxymoron in Milton's *At a Vacation Exercise in the Colledge*," *University of Hartford Studies in Literature*, 17, no. 3 (1985): 1-11. Notably, a similar model of the self was proposed more recently by psychologist Kirk Schneider, whose work draws on a large tradition of literature and existential philosophy. For the most concise description of his "paradoxical self," see Kirk Schneider, *The Paradoxical Self: Toward an Understanding of Our Contradictory Nature* (New York: Insight Books, 1990), 151.

[191] Achsah Guibbory, "'Oh, let mee not serve so,'" 814.

From this turmoil emerged an emotional conflict toward court, a place that offered opportunities but elicited envy. Such envy manifested itself in anti-courtly sentiment, explicit criticism and implicit rejection of its culture through poetics and style. As Achsah Guibbory and Arthur Marotti argue, some rejected the Petrarchan persona to express their bitterness. In their poetry, they parodied courtly style and composed misogynist "attack[s] on female rule in amatory relations," implicitly sieging the power dynamic between a male citizen and his female sovereign.[192] They wrote anti-Petrarchan poetry and opposed Petrarchan idealism with Ovidian cynicism.[193] Donne, like so many of his peers, found himself conflicted over Court, viewing it paradoxically with both reverence and contempt, writing both Petrarchan and Ovidian poetry.

In elegy, Donne found this cynicism; however, he also discovers how to make sense of his conflicting attitudes toward court. In fact, elegy as a genre houses the origins of the conflicting poetic traditions in which Donne wrote. Love elegy is best known as a sort of counter-tradition to Petrarchism, for in contrast with Petrarch, the poet-lover of Ovid's *Amores* speaks about love cynically, acts openly on sexual desires, and pursues one chief beloved along with several mistresses, which leads Ovid's Petrarchistic followers to adopt similar (usually misogynist) stances. Whereas Petrarch's poet-lover reveals erotic desires anxiously and rarely, poets such as Pierre de Ronsard model Ovid's embrace of the erotic.[194] However, from an early modern perspective, elegy also had

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[192] Ibid.

[193] Speaking of epyllion, Ellis identifies how authors opposed Petrarchism with Ovidianism: "The Petrarchan lover, the poems suggest, is in love with the idea of love, whereas a mature Ovidian male believes that love should lead to sex. The Petrarchan lover falls for an idea, prostrating himself before the fantasy of an ideal woman, whereas the Ovidian prefers engagement with actual women." Ellis, *Sexuality and Citizenship*, 9.

[194] As Braden notes, "kissing is all but absent from Petrarch's *Canzoniere*." Braden, *Petrarchan Love and the Continental Renaissance*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999) 108. The few poems with

similarities to Petrarch's poems. Not only do both traditions convey male subjects expressing love for a *donna* or *puella*,[195] they also reveal aspects of the poet-lover's psychology and harness tensions between individual poems and overarching collections.[196] Indeed, Petrarch adapted some of these elements from Propertius' elegies.[197] While in Paris in 1333, he even discovered a Propertian manuscript, which supplied him with several elements for his passionate and faithful poet-lover. Whereas Tibullus, Catullus, and Ovid pursue multiple lovers (female and sometimes male), Petrarch discovered in Propertius a lover who pursues only one woman and repeatedly insists on his fidelity through mythological analogues and impassioned praise. Petrarch adapts motifs, analogies, and poems from Propertius and follows him by making Laura the driving impulse and poetic inspiration of the *Canzoniere*.[198] Consequently,

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erotic theme (*Can*. 22 and 237) are only suggestive. We might even consider the analogue in *Can.* 23 between Petrarch's self and Actaeon as an expression of shame or guilt caused by his sexual desire. In contrast, consider the opening lines of Ronsard's *Amours* 39, "Would to God I had never so foolishly fondled my girlfriend's breast! Without it the other greater longing, alas! Would never, would never have tempted me."

[195] Just as Tibullus and Propertius choose feminine names associated with Apollo, the god of poetry, so Petrarch chooses "Laura," for example, the feminine form of the word for laurel tree, sacred to and closely associated with Apollo. Of course, he also chose it for its other significant connotations such as the laurel wreath worn by poets (and Apollo himself) and for the myth of Apollo and Daphne, who becomes the *laurus*.

[196] See Paul Allen Miller, "Sidney, Petrarch, and Ovid, or Imitation as Subversion," *ELH* 58, no. 3 (1991): 499-522, especially 508. "Thus we might first observe that *Astrophil and Stella*, like Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, is a consciously organized sonnet sequence, possessing both a diachronic development and a synchronic series of recurring thematic motifs. Among their other functions, these motifs serve to prevent the establishment of a single, univocal narrative capable of controlling the collection's interpretation, while also encouraging a multiplicity of possible readings by supplying a variety of contexts in which the individual poems can be read."

[197] For Propertius' influence on Petrarch, see Jennifer Petrie, *Petrarch* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1983), 139-144; Rino Caputo, "Petrarcha and Properzio," in *A Confronto con Properzio*, ed. Giuseppe Catanzaro and Francesco Santucci (Assisi: Accademia Properziana del Subasio, 1998), 113-123; V. Dolla, "Echi Properziani nella cultura e nella poesia dei secoli XIII e XIV," *Properzio nella letteratura italiana. Atti del Convegno Nazionale (Assisi, 15-17 novembre 1985)*, ed. S. Pasquazi (Roma: Bulzoni, 1987), 21-40. Antonio la Penna, *Properzio* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1951), 254-261.

[198] For mythological imagery, see Petrie, 139. Adaptations of particular poems and motifs range from emphasis on the beloved's eyes and the *militia amoris* to adaptations of *Prop*. 1.18 and 3.16, for example, in *Canz.* 35 and 37, where Petrarch borrows the wilderness complaint and beloved's lament at the grave. See Dolla, "Echi Properziana," 34. Likewise, consider the recurring *sparsos capillos* of the *puella* in

Shakespeare treated "wailfull sonnets" and "dire-lamenting elegies" synonymously in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Francis Meres compared English sonneteers and Roman elegists in the *Palladis Tamia*; and poets such as Thomas Lodge and Barnabe Barnes included elegies in their sonnet collections.[199] At the Inns, Donne and his peers recognize how to mobilize Ovidian cynicism against Petrarchan poetry,[200] but Donne also sees in elegy the roots of this Petrarchan poetry. Elegy becomes both an analog for and a means to express his attitudes toward court.

Donne may already have been predisposed to use elegy thus, thanks to his grammar school training, but elegy also offered him a complex representation of the self, at least in contrast to Petrarchan sonnets, in its spoken or "dramatic" mode, which he could use to create not only insincerity but more importantly the conflicted poet-lovers of "On his Mistris" and "The Autumnall." Although both elegy and Petrarchism convey their content in the first-person, Petrarchan poems often represent thought or meditation, neglect specific time or place, and are brief. In contrast, elegies represent speeches or letters, imply a situation that has prompted the speaker, and are long enough to develop an argument.[201] Elegists can use these characteristics to reveal the boundaries between

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Propertius and the other elegists (such as Prop. 2.1.7) and *i capei sparsi* of the *Canzoniere* (such as *Canz*., 90.1).

[199] William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 230-231, 1.1.66. Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1938), 284.

[200] Donne's knowledge of elegy was in fact quite extensive. Although we have no extant editions of the Roman elegists with insightful comments by a young Jack Donne, we do have record of Donne's ownership of early modern and neo-Latin elegies, including a copy of Thomas Campion's elegies published in 1595 and a copy of *Epigrammata et Poetatie Vetera*, which includes not only annotations in Donne's hand but the elegies of Maximianus (once thought to be Gallus) and a fragment attributed to Gallus. For Donne's knowledge of Propertius, see Stella Revard, "Donne and Propertius: Love and Death in London and Rome," 67-79.

[201] This is not to say that Petrarchan poems do not have rhetorical situations. Surely, Bates' "negative condition of desire" may be considered a rhetorical situation in itself. See Catherine Bates, "The Love Sonnet in Early Modern England." However, in elegies these rhetorical situations tend to be more specific and identifiable, take place at a particular moment, and represent actual speech or a letter.

inner and outer self, possibly undermining or obscuring the speaker's speech or conduct. Thus, sincerity has long been the subject of scholarship on elegy, and Paul Veyne, who wrestles persistently with these issues in his monumental *Roman Erotic Elegy*, declares "false sincerity" a defining quality of elegy.[202] Ovid in *Amores* 2.7, for example, creates a sense of insincerity this way. In this elegy, Ovid defends his fidelity to Corinna, who has accused him of pursuing her maid Cypassis. Ovid prompts the reader to wonder whether he is telling the truth or merely manipulating Corinna through rhetoric. His deceit becomes explicit in the next poem (*Amores* 2.8) when he asks Cypassis how Corinna discovered their affair.[203] The revelation, in this latter poem, is that Ovid's words in *Amores* 2.7, although they seemed sincere, did not actually represent "inner truth." In contrast, if Petrarchan poetry prompts readers to question its content, self-delusion or self-deceit usually causes this, not insincerity. Thus, elegy's spoken mode allows Donne to subtly incorporate conflicting inner and outer attitudes within the same poem. However, in poems such as "The Autumnall" and "On his Mistris," the speakers of these poems sincerely profess one attitude while revealing an inner, contradictory desire for the other.

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[202] Sincerity, as a concept, is a prominent strain woven throughout Paul Veyne's monumental work, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, especially 176. On Propertius' sincerity, as it is undermined through mythological analogues, see Hans-Peter Stahl, *Propertius*; J. P. Sullivan, *Propertius*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Margaret Hubbard, *Propertius* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975). See also, A. W. Allen, "'Sincerity' and the Roman Elegists" and "Sunt qui Propertium Malint." Moreover, Ovid's sincerity is examined throughout Barbara Boyd, *Ovid's Literary Loves*.

[203] Such ambiguity around the speaker's fidelity or wantonness is not so emphatically present in every Roman love elegy, but the elegists generally create an air of dubiousness around their speakers' voices. In Propertius' elegies, for example, the persona generally appears faithful, but Propertius cultivates a risqué side of the poet-lover that increases this ambiguity. In *Propertius* 1.3, the poet-lover drunkenly visits his sleeping Cynthia, who wakes to rebuke him for his absence and accuse him of infidelity. The poet-lover ignores her accusations, yet mythical analogues in the poem compare the lovers to Theseus and Ariadne and Odysseus and Penelope. The readers are left uncertain, especially after the poet's tender acts toward his beloved, whether the poet-lover has been unfaithful to his mistress.

This coexistence of these conflicting attitudes has even led scholars and critics to remark that certain problematic passages in these elegies tempt them to read the "wrong way."[204] "On his Mistris," for example, features a lover persuading his beloved to remain home while he leaves England for the continent. The poem begins with the implication that his beloved has asked to accompany him disguised as a page boy. He details reasons why she should stay home, suggesting risks such as dangerous weather. His reasoning ventures toward absurdity, however, when he goes on a xenophobic and sexual tangent. He declares that if she follows, French men will assault her, as will Italians, even if they think she is a boy. Finally, when the speaker believes she will stay in England, he requests that she hide their love while he is away. Critics frequently appreciate the poem's tenderness but wish that its cynical or xenophobic passage were not present, calling it "very disconcerting."[205] On one hand, the desire to excise the poem's cynicism may signal preference for Donne's idealistic love poems. On the other hand, it may result from vestigial readings that take the mistress as Anne More. Both cases praise this tenderness and marginalize its cynicism; however, this cynicism necessarily reflects the speaker's character. Rather than a purely idealistic Petrarchan lover, Donne reveals the speaker to be seriously faithful, cynical, and lascivious.

The most conventional interpretations of "On his Mistris" regard the lover as a Petrarchan devotee, usually focusing on the forceful rhetoric he uses to assert his fidelity.

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[204] Both Bedford and Guss remark on this temptation for "On his Mistris" and "The Autumnall," respectively. Bedford writes that Donne makes "a sophisticated comment on the elegiac mode itself, almost challenging us to read it in the wrong way." R. D. Bedford, "Ovid Metamorphosed: Donne's 'Elegy XVI,'" *EIC* 32 (1982): 219-36, especially 234-5. Donald L. Guss, *John Donne, Petrarchist: Italianate Conceits and Love Theory in the Songs and Sonets*. (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1966), 11.
[205] Wilbur Sanders, *John Donne's Poetry*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 42-3.

The poem begins, for example, with an impassioned plea, expressed through an enumeration of moments and feelings by which the beloved should swear:

> By our first strange and fatal interview
> By all desyres which thereof did insue:
> By our long sterving hopes, by that remorce
> Which my words masculine persuasive force
> Begott in thee, and by the memoree
> Of hurts which Spyes and Riualls threatned mee
> I calmely begg: But by thy Parents Wrath
> By all paynes which want and diuorcement hath
> I coniure thee: And all those othes which I
> And thou haue sworne to seale ioynt constancy
> Here I vnsweare, and oversweare them thus,
> Thou shallt not Love by meanes so dangerous. (1-12)[206]

In these lines, the speaker emphasizes his passion by enumerating critical events in their relationship: their first sight, the ensuing desires, their hopes, her pity, their obstacles, and mutual love pains. With each item, emphasized by anaphora of "by," the lover's concern grows, culminating in the explicit statement: "Thou shallt not Love by meanes so dangerous." The speaker repeatedly verges on uttering this line, only to regress into more oaths — "I calmely begg," "I coniure thee," "Here I vnsweare, and oversweare them thus." When the speaker finally utters this request, Donne devotes an entire line to it. The effect is a rhetorical crescendo that culminates with the speaker's implicit consternation and emphasizes his devotion. These rhetorical maneuvers—Donne's "natural force of language"—give readers the sense of "conviction," as Gardner puts it, that the speaker sincerely cares for his beloved.[207]

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[206] Whenever possible, quotations of Donne's poetry come from *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, ed. Gary A. Stringer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994-). Subsequent references to line numbers are cited parenthetically in the text.
[207] Helen Gardner (ed), *The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets*, xvii-xviii.

Likewise, the speaker demonstrates this care with sensitive reassurance of his fidelity. For example, when he swears, "I'le go: and by thy kind leaue leaue behind / Thee only worthy to nurce in my mind / Thirst to come back" (15-17), he considerately solicits her permission while affirming an inner desire to return. Again, Donne's language gives us a sense of conviction. The mistress' "leaue" denotes permission, and its repetition even momentarily transfers the act ("leaue behind") to the mistress, so that the speaker appears to share the decision *and* the departure with his beloved. What she fears, of course, is that he will "leaue behind / *Thee*" (emphasis mine), a fear which the speaker immediately assuages with a complimentary statement of fidelity: "Thee only worthy to nurce in my mind / Thirst to come back." By enjambing "thee" from the rest of its clause, he separates her from his act of departure and makes the compliment more emphatic. This statement's force pivots around a similar use of enjambment, which Donne uses to highlight the paradoxical greatness of his beloved. She alone defies logic in her ability to simultaneously "nurse" and induce "thirst." In these opening lines, the speaker asserts and focuses on his sincerely serious fidelity; however, he also subtly reveals another polarity of his inner self: his skepticism and lasciviousness.

Donne follows this impassioned expression of fidelity with an attempt to dissuade the beloved from following; however, his argument quickly devolves into xenophobic and misogynistic humor, revealing a more cynical attitude. After the speaker identifies several dangers to dissuade her from following him, he raises the prospect of rape:

> all will spy in thy face
> A blushing womanly discovering grace.
> . . . . . .
> Men of France, changeable Cameleons
> Spittles of diseases, Shops of fashions

> Lives fuellers and the rightest Companee
> Of Players which vpon the worlds Stage bee
> Will quickly know thee, and know thee, and alas
> Th'indifferent Italian as we pas
> His warme Land, well content to thinke thee Page
> Will haunt thee with such lust and hideous rage
> As Lots fayre guests were vext; But none of these
> Nor Spungy Hydroptique Dutche shall thee displease.
> If thou stay here. (29-30, 33-43)

These lines' xenophobic distrust and sexual threats contrast with the previous attitude with which the speaker addressed his beloved. His erotic vision of these countries suggest an underlying lewdness in his persona, which at the very least recalls the speakers of Donne's more lascivious elegies and satires. What had been suppressed previously, when he asserts a serious fidelity, surfaces and perturbs readers, who expected one attitude or the other. Instead, Donne reveals the speaker's polarities, paradoxical attitudes within one self.

Although these cynical passages have been described as abrupt or sudden, Donne has been integrating Ovidian characteristics since the opening lines. While expressing his concern for his beloved, the speaker also flaunts his mistress' "remorce / Which [his] words masculine *persuasive* force / Begott in [her]" (emphasis mine). These lines recall Roman love elegy's erotic-persuasive purpose but underline it in a way that emphasizes the speaker's wantonness. The speaker presents his words as being emphatically virile ("masculine") and forceful. His rhetoric has even impregnated ("begott") the beloved with pity ("remorce"). These lines describe their first interactions and reveal some of the speaker's inclinations, which he seemingly prides himself on. He may be faithful to his beloved and genuinely concerned with her well-being, as we have already seen, but his sexual jokes about the French and Italians are no longer surprising. Donne presents a

lover confronting idealism and cynicism in this farewell, a lover who prides himself on his seductive abilities yet is genuinely faithful toward the beloved.

These polarities, too, enrich the poem, and as it progresses, Donne positions the speaker's statements between these polarities, showing how they both motivate his speech. When the speaker prohibits the revelation of their love, for example, Donne's speaker reveals competing intentions. He desires both to conceal their illicit affair and comfort his beloved. The speaker asks,

> When I ame gone dreame me some happines
> Nor let thy looks our Long hid Love confes.
> Nor prayse nor disprayse mee: blesse nor curse
> Openly Loves force: Nor in bed fright thy Nourse
> With Midnights startings, crying out Oh Oh
> Nurse oh my Love is slayne: I saw him go
> Ore the whight Alpes alone, I saw him, I,
> Assaild, fight, taken, stab'd, bleede, fall, and dy.
> Augure mee better chance, except dreade Jove
> Think it enough for mee, to'have had thy love. (47-56)

In these lines the speaker expresses his desire that his beloved not mention his name for fear that their love will be cursed. Rather than worry, he asks that she "dreame [him] some happines" and "augure [him] better chance." Explicitly, he worries that he'll be unable to return to her and is sensitive to her distress. However, he has also reminded us that their love is forbidden and "Long hid." After all, the parents still supervise the beloved, a nurse cares for her, and "Spyes and Riualls" watch her. The speaker may fear for her well-being but in these lines he also fears being caught in an illicit relationship.

The tone of the beloved's imagined fright is also ambiguous in these lines, and Donne leaves the reader to question the speaker's motivation. In fact, whereas C. S. Lewis discovers "sickened male contempt for the whole female world of nurses and

'midnight startings' and hysterics" in these lines,[208] Joan Bennett responds by identifying the tender sentiment in the final line: "Thinke it inough for me, to'haue had thy Love."[209] Both tenderness and frustration are present, as the speaker's sympathetic vision of his beloved's fright collides with his fear of being caught. His impression of her fright borders on inordinate panic as he transfers his own anxieties into the statement. Using the monosyllabic repetition of "Oh"s and "I"s to abbreviate lines, the speaker conveys both her and his exasperation, which builds toward the narration of her dream: "Assayld, fight, taken, stabb'd, bleede, fall, and dye." These predominantly monosyllabic verbs creep toward the speaker's death but also characterize the beloved's exaggerated fancy through the graphic sequence of events. As the speaker imagines her fright at his death, his own anxiety about the affair intensifies, and in the middle ground, readers can find both frustration and sympathy in his voice.

Thus, rather than a faithful lover who abruptly shifts tone, Donne creates a speaker confronting both Petrarchan and Ovidian attitudes. The speaker focuses on and asserts his fidelity and love, yet Donne reveals that the speaker is simultaneously suppressing a lascivious and cynical attitude. He sincerely reassures her that he will return but also prides himself on his seductive rhetoric and sexual humor. Even in the final speech, although he worries that his absence will indirectly lead to the discovery of their affair, he never suggests he will abandon her or pursue another beloved. Instead, he sympathizes with her concerns and imagines her anxiety at his departure. Donne's

[208] C. S. Lewis, "Donne and Love Poetry in the Seventeenth Century," in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 78.
[209] Joan Bennett, "The Love Poetry of John Donne. A Reply to Mr. C. S. Lewis," in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 85-104, especially 97.

speaker acknowledges his paradoxical attitudes and, as he says farewell to his beloved, yields to Petrarchan attitudes while suppressing cynicism. Donne presents a unified self confronting paradoxical attitudes and reveals both how these attitudes motivate action and how to navigate their contradiction.

He creates a similar conflict between such attitudes in "The Autumnall," wherein a speaker divulges his attraction to a middle-aged woman. Rather than merely describe her beauties, he gives reasons why a woman of her age is better to love than a young (or elderly) woman. The poem's chief conceits re-figure her age in other systems of temporality, and the speaker justifies his attraction through these conceits, presenting her age as a temperate time of day or season. Generally certain qualities that come with age are refigured in a positive light. Wrinkles serve as Love's trenches, less passion brings more reason, and her "Autumnall" season is more temperate than youth's hot "springe" (1) and deathly "winter" (28). Donne ends the poem with a metaphor of retrograde motion, encapsulating the speaker's wish to pursue older women rather than "panting after growing beauties" (49). Yet, once again there is critical confusion over the speaker's attitude. Whereas early scholarship followed Walton's claim that Donne professed admiration for Magdelene Herbert in this poem, more recent readings proclaim the poem's cynicism and sexuality. The poem, however, has both serious praise and cynical eroticism. The speaker acknowledges both attitudes and, while defending his beloved to someone, likely a male peer, navigates these attitudes by incorporating them.

Although most scholars would categorize "The Autumnall" as a paradoxical encomium or "ugly beauty" poem, the speaker of this poem not only praises but also defends his beloved's unconventional beauty, placing himself in opposition with societal

custom. The opening lines, for example, form the speaker's primary claim: "Noe springe, nor summer beautie, hath such grace, / As I haue seene in one Autumnall face" (1-2); and subsequent lines evidence this claim as a refutation of spring and "winter" faces. At the poem's end, the speaker even restates his argument, re-asserting that he hates "extreames" (45), and concludes that he "shall ebbe on, with them whoe homeward goe" rather than "panting after growing beauties" (49). The defensive nature of "The Autumnall" positions the speaker's claim at odds with custom or public opinion: rather than spring or growing beauties, he is justified in pursuing an autumnal or middle-aged woman. However, despite his defense, the speaker justifies his attraction through lewd and misogynist innuendos. Addressing an audience who is likely male and presumably sides with custom, the speaker accordingly incorporates both Petrarchan praise of virtue and Ovidian eroticism into his defense.

The speaker's genuine interest in the beloved is revealed in the opening lines, when he praises her moralizing influence and tactfully downplays her age. He makes two initial assertions:

> Yong beauties force your loue, and that's a Rape,
> This doth but Councell, yet you cannot scape.
> If t'were a shame to love, here t'were noe shame,
> Affection here takes reverences Name. (3-6)

Utilizing the couplet's facility for antithesis, Donne pits the first line against the second, contrasting how "Yong Beauties force" whereas "This [Autumnall beauty] doth but Councell." The speaker pits the violence of "force" against the reason of "Councell," and the restrictive "but" emphasizes the beloved's mild effects. More importantly, whereas the speaker explicitly identifies "Yong beauties," he refrains from identifying middle-

aged beauties. Instead, he merely refers to her beauty by the pronoun "this." In fact, he never explicitly identifies her age. Instead, he tactfully avoids it through the central metaphor of her "autumnall" season, allowing him to emphasizes the mildness of his middle-aged beloved's beauty while avoiding impropriety. The next couplet works similarly, though pivoted around the caesura. The speaker remarks, "If t'were a shame to love, here t'were noe shame. / Affection here takes reverences Name." Donne now sets the line's first half against the latter and emphatically reserves the reasoning for the subsequent line. In the first portion, the speaker suggests love's shameful potential and in the second portion he denies it, suggesting that with age comes a respectable affection. Again, the speaker tactfully asserts the beloved's mild effects, circumventing her age through the adverbial "here," i.e., "with my middle-aged mistress." Whereas the speaker's praise of the beloved's beauty explicitly conveys his feelings, his tact in doing so implies the extent of his care.

This respect continues throughout the poem; however, Donne complicates the speaker's attitude by mingling it with subtle impropriety and cynicism. Even in the initial praise, statements regarding "Yong beauties" may discomfort readers with the "force" and "Rape" of line 3. As the poem continues, the compliments and witticisms lose tactfulness and emphasize the mistress' sexual qualities. The poem's fourth couplet introduces this tonal complexity, when the speaker remarks, "Were her first yeares the Golden age? That's true, / But nowe shee's gold ofte try'ed, and euer newe" (7-8). Whereas the speaker previously skirted around the beloved's age, now he draws attention

to it and follows it with a compliment that bears potential innuendo. The beloved is "ofte try'ed" (i.e., sexually experienced) "and euer newe."[210]

Eventually, the speaker's sexuality and cynicism grows more explicit. For example, when he describes her youth as a "torrid and inflaming time," he not only declares the youth's excessive heat but implies a previous lust (9). The speaker intends this line to contrast with her current state, since she now "askes more heate then comes from hence" (11) but in doing so he asserts that she incites wantonness more than she is wanton herself. Furthermore, these lines subtly suggest her agency in this exchange, since she "askes" for wantonness. The implication continues when the speaker remarks that "He in a fever wishes pestilence" (12): he desires something that may confound his excessive passion. Although he once again praises her age, his language is suggestive and lacks the tact and propriety with which he started the poem. The most blatant of these occurs in a late analogy:

> Zerxes strange Lydian Loue, the Platane tree,
> Was lou'd for age, none being soe *large* as shee.
> Or els because being yonge, Nature did blesse
> Her youth with Ages glorie, *Barrennesse*. (29-32, emphases mine)

These lines draw a comparison between the beloved and Zerxe's Platane tree for its age and age's effects; however, the qualities that the speaker emphasizes suit the beloved strangely: largeness (i.e., liberality)[211] and "Barrennesse." The speaker hints at sexual

[210] On the one hand, the metaphor of the mistress as gold calls to mind her virtue but also her proof of this through trials and the fact that she remains new. On the other hand, it also denotes a statement of her value and beauty, with the implication that she has been "ofte try'ed," i.e., sexually, though without stain or loss of this value.

[211] "Large, adj.". OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press.

themes and misogynistically implies that the beloved's value derives from her age and sexuality. He values her because she cannot become pregnant.

In the poem's conclusion, however, the speaker's praise and lasciviousness combine into a powerful statement. He justifies his attraction once more:

> If wee loue things long sought, age is a thinge
> Which wee are fifty yeares in Compassinge.
> If transitorie things, which soone decaye,
> Age must bee loueliest at the latest daye. (33-36)

Donne sincerely invokes in these lines the anticipation of an item long sought and, in contrast, the intense pleasure of something fleeting to describe love for the beloved and her beauty. Yet, this justification immediately precedes a cynical rant:

> But name not winter faces, whose skinn's slack,
> Lanke, as an vnthrifts pursse; but a soules sack,
> Whose eyes seeke light within, for all here is shade,
> Whose mouthes are holes, rather worne-out then made,
> Whose every tooth to a seuerall place is gone,
> To vexe their soules, at Resurrection;
> Name note these liveing deaths-heads vnto mee,
> For these not antient, but antiques bee. (37-43)

The clash between the speaker's remarks that "Age must bee loueliest at the latest daye" with his harsh criticism of "winter faces" — the season that must follow for the beloved — creates an initial irony that grows with his rant's harshness. Whereas the speaker previously stressed her beauty and mildness, in these lines he fears the loss of beauty in age. However, in the couplet that follows, these contradictions produce a cynical statement that unveils his fidelity: "I hate extreames; yet I had rather staye / With tombes, then cradles to weare out a day" (45-46). Despite all that he despises about winter faces, the speaker admits with or without her beauty, he would continue to prefer his beloved at this age.

The final lines, after Donne manages to incorporate cynicism with fidelity, sit ambiguously between the speaker's paradoxical attitudes, and we can see how both inform the speaker's defense. As is fitting for his closing remarks, he restates his initial claim:

> Since such Loues naturall lation is may still
> My Loue descend, and iourney downe the hill
> Not panting after growing beauties, soe
> I shall ebbe on, with them whoe homeward goe. (46-50)

The speaker concludes by remarking that Love's natural motion is downward toward death and thus wishes his own love to descend and recede with aged beauties rather than youths, as is natural and more fitting; however, in these lines' there is also subdued cynicism, an implication that the speaker pursues older women for the ease. The ascent after "growing beauties" proves more difficult, hence he would be "panting after" rather than ebbing or receding. Whatever his motivation the final statement ultimately declares his intention to remain with his beloved: "I *shall* ebbe on, with them whoe homeward goe" (emphasis mine).

As in "On his Mistris," the speaker in "The Autumnall" harbors paradoxical attitudes, but in "The Autumnall" the speaker confronts these attitudes by incorporating them, rather than asserting one over the other. He has genuine affection toward the unconventional beloved and praises both her virtue and sexuality to justify it. The poem begins affectionately, as the speaker avoids identifying the beloved's age and its effects, but this tact deteriorates when the speaker joins this praise with sexual innuendo. On one hand, he argues that she remains beautiful and is more virtuous in her old age. On the other hand, he suggests that she remains sexually viable and is more approachable.

Ultimately, he combines these attitudes after dreading the effects of old age and admitting that he still would prefer his beloved to a younger love. In this way, as the speaker defends his unconventional beloved against public opinion, he is confronted by these paradoxical attitudes and incorporates both to justify his affection. “The Autumnall” is thus both a reverent defense of the beloved and an irreverent defense of the speaker’s sexuality.

In both poems, Donne conveys a unified sense of self modelled on the figure of paradox. Both speakers in these poems harbor contrary attitudes but navigate them according to their rhetorical situation. The result is a more realistic sincerity. In “On his Mistris,” Donne creates a speaker who asserts his fidelity and also reveals a suppressed cynicism, while he says farewell to his beloved. In “The Autumnall,” the speaker defends his beloved by incorporating praise of both her virtue and her sexuality. In elegy, Donne finds a genre that is not only tangled in both Petrarchism and Ovidianism but also supplies rhetorical situations in which to interrogate selfhood. It allows him to test relationships between inward and outward expression, to simulate sincerity during conflict. These poems suggest that before Donne’s priestly vocation supplied him with a unified sense of self, he was able to conceive of one through elegy and the figure of paradox. Ultimately, the conflicting attitudes in these poems reflect Donne’s own experience at the Inns of Court in their competing Petrarchan and Ovidian attitudes. Donne, like his peers, both relied on the Court and held it in contempt for limited opportunity, composing Ovidian and anti-Petrarchan poems in symbolic protest. However, “On his Mistris” and “The Autumnall” are neither Petrarchan poems of flattery nor Ovidian poems of protest. Rather, they are Donne’s own attempts to represent the

paradox of selfhood and his own conflicting attitudes at the Inns. Feeling both reverence and contempt, Donne discovers in elegy a way to express his paradox while achieving a novel and more realistic sense of sincerity.

The process of self-presentation that Shakespeare dramatizes in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* comes to life in John Donne, who like Proteus and Valentine turns to elegiac models at the threshold. Fresh out of grammar school, Proteus and Valentine travel and pursue love; Donne, on the other hand, finds himself at the Inns of Court, where so many of his contemporaries were using poetry to present themselves in relation to the Queen and court. Rent between Petrarchism and Ovidianism, Donne turns to elegy to not only present his paradox but to interrogate the possible unity of the self. In the poems of Milton, which conclude this dissertation, we will observe how Milton too uses elegy to interrogate the self and selfhood. In his 1645 *Poems*, a collection which spans the first few decades of his life, Milton compiles his various self-presentations and ambitions over the years and revises his elegies to make sense of them all, to re-present himself as he searches for a higher vision in epic. In this final chapter, we will hear echoes of the epic/elegy polemic that we left in Augustan Rome, manifesting most loudly in the elegiac conflict—in Milton's conflict—over *otium* and *officium*.

Chapter 4: Milton, The Grave Poet

Exile from Idleness in the *Elegiarum Liber*

Much of the recent scholarship on John Milton has sought to disrupt the idea of a monumental, monolithic Milton: the image of an often reclusive, proud, and self-confident poet who, as early as the 1645 *Poems*, declared his epic vocation.[212] Jonathan Goldberg found "various Miltons" beneath the supposed consistency created by his "revising and rewriting,"[213] and Annabel Patterson found Miltonic attitudes in "conflict between radicalism and elitism."[214] Even in taking the *Poems* as our focus, although Milton consistently renounces juvenile genres and declares his poetic vocation,[215] he presents varying ideas of this vocation. Is he the divine poet of *Ad Patrem* or the Arthurian *vates* of *Epitaphium Damonis*? Do his pastoral poems declare a Virgilian career? Do his elegies declare an Ovidian one? We must accept that fragments predominate. The *Poems* consists of different genres and a variety of subjects, written

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[212] See Peter C. Herman, *Destabilizing Milton: "Paradise Lost" and the Poetics of Incertitude* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). See also Peter C. Herman and Elizabeth Sauer (ed.), *The New Milton Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), which calls for attention to the discontinuities and contradictions of Milton's work, a resistance to "reading Milton into coherence" (1). For such a reading of the elegies in particular, see Jacob Blevins, *Humanism and Classical Crisis*, 85-103.

[213] Goldberg, "Dating Milton," *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*," ed. Elizabeth Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 199-222, especially 200.

[214] Annabel Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 159. She finds this conflict in the *Poems* rather than a unified image of a "contemporary gentleman" that compensates for his anti-prelatical pamphlets, as asserted in Thomas N. Corns, "Milton's Quest for Respectability," *The Modern Language Review* 77, no. 4 (1982): 769-779, especially 778. See also Peter Lindenbaum, "John Milton and the Republican Mode of Literary Production," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (January 1991): 121-136, especially 2 & 135.

[215] Louis Martz reads the poems as a farewell to pastoral and youth, more generally. See Louis Martz, "The Rising Poet," *The Lyric and Dramatic Milton* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 3-34. See also the corresponding chapter in Martz, *Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980). Gale H. Carrithers, Jr. likewise sees the collection as conveying movement from "youthful incompleteness to realized, adult self-hood." See Carrithers, "*Poems* (1645): On Growing Up," *Milton Studies* 15 (1981): 161-179, 162. For Milton's "autobiographical impulse" especially in his early poetry, see Albert C. Labriola, "Portraits of an Artist: Milton's Changing Self-Image," *Milton Studies* 19 (1984): 179-194, 193.

over a 20 year period. But there is some worth in shoring these works against Milton's ruins, so long as we remember this fragmentation. Despite their scattered attitudes, Milton, after all, did attempt to unify these poems in the 1645 collection.[216] Terry Sherwood thus looks at Milton's revisions as part of his self-presentation,[217] but whereas Sherwood searches for continuities in self-presentation throughout Milton's *corpus*, I examine how Milton makes sense of his own fragmentation in this one collection. When Milton unifies the scattered poems of the 1645 text, we can ask how he revises his self-conception. Milton fashions himself around the collection's fragmentation and, especially, his most consistent contradiction regarding his use of time.[218]

In the book of Latin elegies within this large book of poems, we find Milton's most concerted effort at self-coherence, at making sense of his self-division. In particular, Milton's elegies reveal a sympathy with the exile: an Ovid lamenting his displacement and dislocation. Critics have long recognized Milton's tendency to present himself as a sort of solitary intellectual, and after the return of Charles II, Milton would find himself in a position analogous to exile. Although Milton did not suffer true banishment, he was imprisoned, and as Louis Martz describes, Milton became "doubly exiled … first by his loss of eyesight, and then by political isolation."[219] He became, as Christopher D'Addario

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[216] For the intentional collection and arrangement of the 1645 *Poems*, see Martz, "The Rising Poet," in *The Lyric and Dramatic Milton*, 3-34; and Revard, *Milton and the Tangles of Neaera's Hair*.
[217] Sherwood, 294. Sherwood sees continuity in Milton's self-presentation in his defensiveness. Thus, he sees "each revised text as a pre-emptive self-defense, one more self-defense by the defender of defenders." My project fits in with many other works that investigate Milton's consistent writing of himself into his text. A project that resembles Sherwood but with less direct engagement with recent postmodern readings of Milton's self-presentation is Stephen Fallon, *Milton's Peculiar Grace*: Self-Representation and Authority (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
[218] Maggie Kilgour begins to identify this crisis, to some extent, in her *Milton and the Metamorphosis of Ovid*, 126-148.
[219] Martz, *Poet of Exile*, 79.

argues, an "interior exile."[220] This feeling of displacement echoes throughout Milton's *Paradise Lost*, whose name denotes the banishment of mankind's original ancestors, whose opening scene depicts Satan newly cast out from heaven, and whose Miltonic *vates* claims he composed the poems "in darkness, and with dangers compast round / And solitude."[221] I suggest, however, that Milton's empathy for the figure of the exile predates the restoration, for Milton reflects, in his 1645 self-presentation, on experiences of self-division manifesting around crises of language, location, and self, experiences that recall to Milton the Exodus and Ovid's later exile elegies.[222] As I argue, Milton's elegies, in the 1645 *Poems*, become his primary means for self-presentation as a form that specifically facilitates self-expression.[223] From the mix of elegiac traditions, especially Ovid's *Tristia*, Milton presents himself as a self-imposed (and romanticized) exile, confronting self-division and, especially, his youthful crisis over duty (*officium*) and leisure (*otium*). In his other early poems, as a young man eager to become a serious poet, Milton worries about his *otium* spent writing lyric poems. On one hand, he views poetry as inferior to Christian vocation and contemplation; on the other hand, he sees time spent writing epic

[220] Christopher D'Addario, *Exile and Journey in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20, 87-123.
[221] John Milton, "Paradise Lost," *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1957), 346, 7.27-8. These lines audibly echo Ovid's frequent descriptions of his state in Tomis: "compast" (often) with danger and "evil tongues" (l. 26).
[222] D'Addario describes exile as "a profoundly disruptive and traumatic experience, one that entails both a sharp break in the quotidian existence of one's life and a removal from that which is most familiar and comforting. … As the exile is removed from familiar material, structural and familial surroundings, his or her sense of a coherent identity and continuous history is ruptured." See D'Addario, *Exile and Journey*, 8.
[223] It is a series of first-person statements selected and (re-)organized to be read both diachronically and synchronically, and more so than a narrative, its organization creates a psychology for the poet, an inward self revealed through outer conduct. In all of Milton's 1645 *Poems*, especially those that declare or anticipate his newfound vocation, Milton is self-fashioning, but in the elegies, these first-person poems with their unique "personal" voice, as Revard describes it, he has more control over his self-presentation. Revard, "The Design of the 1645 *Poems*," *The Young Milton: The Emerging Author, 1620-1642*, ed. Edward Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 211.

and divine poetry as justified, especially in contrast to love poetry and even pastoral. However, he also resists relinquishing these types of poetry. He sometimes argues that work and play complement each other and as he models himself on both Virgilian and Ovidian careers, he sees the path to epic and divine poetry as one that necessarily passes through trifling genres. In his *Elegiarum Liber*, a poetic book within a book, Milton presents himself as a self-imposed and reluctant exile from youthful *otium*, preparing for a (yet unknown) serious poetic cause and reinforcing his more ubiquitous self-presentation as a grave poet, in darkness and solitude.

Milton's consistent concern with the proper way to spend his time has its roots in classical debates over *otium*, which spread even into the genre of elegy. As Brian Vickers has explained, despite modern conceptions of *otium* as innocent leisure, it was a more ambivalent — often pejorative — term.[224] In antiquity, it was closely associated with *segnis*, *desidia*, *inertia*, *voluptas*, *socordia*, *luxus*, and *ignavia*.[225] It was opposed most frequently to *officium*, duty, in the most elevated sense, of politicians and generals but also of everyday life.[226] In fact, *otium* was employed in many Roman proverbs as the gateway to other vices. Thus, Livy treats *otium* as a corruptive threat throughout the history of Rome. Repeatedly, he refers to *otium*'s excitement of other vices, such as in book 23, wherein he describes the corruption of Hannibal's army at Capua. However, an ambivalence develops, facilitated by Cicero's and Sallust's attempts to turn their *otium*

[224] Brian Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 1. Vickers and other recent studies of *otium* rely heavily on Jean-Marie André, *Recherches sur l'otium romain*, Annales litteraires de l'Universite de Besançon, vol. 52 (Besançon : Université de Franche-Comté, 1962). See also J. P. Toner, *Leisure and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
[225] Ibid., 14
[226] Charles L. Platter, "*Officium* in Catullus and Propertius: A Foucauldian Reading," *Classical Philology*, 90(3), July 1995, 211-224, especially 215.

into a legitimate activity through their works of rhetoric, philosophy, and history. In his *De Officiis*, for example, Cicero when speaking of men who "have withdrawn from civic duty [*negotiis publicis*] and taken refuge in retirement [*otium*]" differentiates between those seeking tranquility who devoted themselves to learning and those dreading toil and labor who condemn glory.[227] The former, of course, is more honorable. In contrast to the latter, it justifies Cicero's own lifestyle; however, it still is second best. As Cicero himself says, to be led away from an active public life even for *honestum otium*, for study, is against one's duty (*officium*),[228] and even when he speaks of *otium cum dignitate*, Cicero latently acknowledges that *otium* is otherwise *inhonestum* or *sine dignitate*.[229]

In Augustan Rome, *otium* was also at the heart of the elegists' self-presentation.[230] In fact, Cicero's reference to men who dread labor and condemn glory anticipates the elegists' self-presentation. As Paul Allen Miller argues, the rift created by the fall of the Roman republic and the rise of the empire left the Roman male's sense of self distant from cultural expectation.[231] As power and responsibility concentrated itself into fewer hands, private pursuits increased as did a new sense of eroticism, which the Roman elegists embraced in the face of the increasingly insufficient signifying practices

[227] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 70-3, 1.21.71-73.
[228] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 20-21, 1.6.19. See J. P. V. D. Balsdon, "Auctoritas, Dignitas, Otium," *The Classical Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1950): 43-50, especially 47.
[229] Later, Seneca would treat *otium* similarly. He famously claims that "of all men they alone are at leisure who take time for philosophy, they alone really live; for they are not content to be good guardians of their own lifetime only"; but he elsewhere remarks on *otium* as a degenerative vice, an act of paralysis. See *De Ira*, 3.29.1 and *De Brev Vit* 2.1. See also, Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 27-33.
[230] For *otium* in Roman love elegy, see especially Alison Keith, *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, 139-166.
[231] Miller, *Subjecting Verses*, 18. See also, Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy*, 155.

of Augustan Rome. *Otium* becomes "the defining characteristic of the state they found themselves in."[232] Catullus may, at one point, criticize this *otium*:

> *Otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est:*
> *Otio exsultas nimiumque gestis.*
> *Otium et reges prius et beatas*
> *perdidit urbes.*
> "Idleness, Catullus, does you harm, you riot in your idleness and wanton too much. Idleness ere now has ruined both kings and wealthy cities."[233]

But he and the elegists pursue it elsewhere. Tibullus' opening poem, for example, chooses *inertia* (inactivity) over the soldier's *labor*, and Ovid ironically justifies otiose love as service in Cupid's army.[234] Indeed, *otium* is the ideal state for love, so much so that, if you want to avoid love, Ovid's first rule is to flee *otium*.[235] Moreover, as Ovid will attest in his exile, *otium* is also the preferred state for poetic composition: "poetry requires the writer to be in privacy [*secessum*] and ease [*otia*]."[236] Whereas Cicero's and Sallust's *otium* possesses an ambivalence for its utility in composing great works, for the elegists it becomes ambivalent as an acknowledged negative state that they embrace to pursue private interests, such as love and poetry.

Otium's ambivalence continues, and by the seventeenth century, it becomes especially relevant in poetry and politics.[237] Before this, of course, *otium* entered

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[232] Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 19.
[233] Catullus, "LI," *Catullus, Tibullus, Pervigilium Veneris*, trans. F. W. Cornish (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 58-61.
[234] See Tibullus 1.1; Ovid, *Amores*, 1.9.
[235] Ovid, "*Remedia Amoris*," *The Art of Love and Other Poems*, 186-189, ll. 136-150: "*Otia si tollas, periere Cupidinis arcus, / Contemptaeque iacent et sine luce faces. / Quam platanus vino gaudet, quam opulus unda, / Et quam limosa canna palustris humo, / Tam Venus otia amat.*"
[236] Ovid, *Tristia - Ex Ponto*, 1.1.41. This section (1.1.35ff) describes Ovid's state in relation to the ideal conditions for writing poetry.
[237] See below the discussion of the *Book of Sports*. See also Henry Marten's variation on the "*Beatus ille*" poem ("*Ignavus ille*") in protest of Cromwell's 1653 dissolution of parliament: Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness," 149.

Christian writings, used by Jerome, for example, in his Vulgate to denote idleness,[238] and eventually it is understood under the sin of *acedia* or sloth. As Vickers notes, "if *otium* was a vice to the Romans, in the Christian Middle Ages, it was a sin to be viewed with equal disgust."[239] Yet, the word retains its ambivalence, and in a gesture that hearkens back to Cicero, Petrarch identifies two types of *otium*: one that is "busy, which even in very rest is doing somewhat and busie about honest affyres," and the other "slouthful and idle, and geven onely to sluggyhnes, than which there is nothyng more loathsome, or more lyke to the grave."[240] In seventeenth-century England, issues of *otium* and retirement appear particularly in Horatian imitations and country house poems, which often feature arguments for a life of ease. However, as was Horace's Second Epode, many of these are meant ironically in their conscious admiration of an otherwise pejorative term. Others are more ambiguous, and indeed many recent critics are satisfied reading Marvell's "The Garden" and "Upon Appleton House" as extolling such retirement.[241] Into the eighteenth century, as Vickers concludes, "*otium* could only be accepted if strongly qualified as *honestum*, a leisure which yielded 'fruits' in works of literature, poetry, philosophy or history."[242] The young Milton, as we'll see, worried whether and, if so, what fruits of literature could keep his own *otium honestum*.

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[238] See Eccles. 33.29, Ezech. 16.49, Proverbs, 31.27, 1 Tim. 5.11-13.
[239] Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 111.
[240] See Petrarch, "Leisure and Rest: *De ocio et quiete*," *Petrarch's Remedies for Fortunes Fair and Foul*, trans. Conrad H. Rawski, vol. 1 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 62-63. Translation from Thomas Twyne, *Phisicke Against Fortune, as well as Prosperous, as Adverse, Conteyned in Two Bookes* (London, 1579), fols 27^{r}-28^{v}. Cited by Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 115.
[241] On these interpretations of Marvell's "The Garden" see Vickers opening discussion, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 3, fn. 2.
[242] Ibid., 153.

In the years between Milton's education at St. Paul's and his publication of the 1645 *Poems*, Milton generally agrees to conventional ideas of how leisure should be spent. His grammar school education had disciplined him on the subject, teaching him to cast off the idle play of his childhood. For example, one exercise explicitly targeted the leisure of this age by requiring students to translate the following lines:

> All that was to me a pleasure when I was a childe, from iii yere olde to x, while I was undre my father and mothers kepyng, be tornyde now to tormentes and payn. For than I was wont to lye stylle abedde tyll it was forth dais. … What sport it was to take my lusty pleasur betweixte the shetes, to behold the rofe, the beamys. … But nowe the worlde rennyth upon another whele. For nowe at fyve of the clocke by the monelyght I most go to my booke and lete sleepe and slouthe alon.[243]

Milton echoes such sentiments in his "*Elegiaca Carmina*," a conventional assignment in which students implore a peer to cast off sluggishness, and later in his second poem on the university carrier, "Another the Same," he attributes the carrier's death to leisure and ease.[244] However, Milton's retirement in 1632 to his father's house, where he "devoted himself with the most complete leisure [*otium*] to reading through the Greek and Latin writers," places Milton in a peculiar position.[245] Rather than pursuing a public life or active employment, Milton chooses to continue his studies and write poetry. There, in reply to a friend's letter, he even feels the need to defend his choice "to dreame away my yeares in the armes of studious retirement." His friend, he notes, has admonished him for his life "yet obscure & unserviceable to mankind," but Milton justifies his retirement as a

[243] This example predates Milton considerably but demonstrates how grammar school education in the seventeenth century disciplined students regarding idleness, separating the leisure of their childhood from the leisure of their schooling. Quoted in William Nelson, *A Fifteenth Century Schoolbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 21.
[244] With humor, Milton declares that the carrier's "leisure told him that his time was come, / And lack of load, made his life burdensome" (23-4) and likewise that "ease was his chief disease" (21).
[245] John Milton, "*Defensio Secunda*," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 4.1, 538ff.

means to avoid "more obvious temptations" to sin, such as "gaine, praeferment, ambition, & the like." He attaches his sonnet "How soon hath time" as a sort of defense, proving the worth of his poetic composition. Yet, Milton, like his contemporaries, still acknowledges in this letter the potential impropriety of his choice and in the letter's conclusion, Milton admits, "I am something suspicio[us] of my selfe, & doe take notice of a certaine belatednesse in me."[246] He recognizes that there is a more active life that he could have assumed, perhaps in a legal or ecclesiastical career, and that his retirement may appear suspect to his contemporaries; yet, he asserts that his studious leisure is justifiable in that it keeps him from temptation.

Milton, however, seems reluctant (as we might expect) to relinquish the idle pleasures of his youth. Famously, at Cambridge, Milton argues in his *Prolusion 6* that pairing "scholarly leisure" and "sportive exercises" increases productivity. The speech is an assignment but Milton may very well believe his claim. Specifically, he argues that "the rotation of work and play can always be relied upon to drive off the tedium of satiety, and interrupted activities are picked up again all the more eagerly."[247] For this argument, he dons the "pretense of idiocy," as did Junius Brutus, to make "a serious speech in praise of buffoonery." He humbly declares that his "talent is exceedingly small" for these "sports and quips" and declares his shame about his playful wit to his audience: "when I descend into myself and as if with eyes turned inward intimately consider my slender ability, I often blush at what I alone know, and suddenly an assault

[246] Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 319-321, 320.
[247] Elsewhere, "The Romans had their Floralia, the country people had their Palilia, and the Bakers their Fornacalia, and we too have the Socratic custom of entertaining ourselves—especially at this time when we are free from routine business," "*Romani* sua habuere Floralia, Rustici sua Palilia, Pistores sua Forvacui, *Socratico* more ludere solemus." Milton, "Prolusion 6," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 266-287, 282.

of sadness crushes and chokes my surging joy." Perhaps he intends these lines with a hint of irony, for as Maggie Kilgour notes Milton seems to have enjoyed playing the Lord of Misrule.[248] And certainly he does, if his jokes on the riddles of the sphincter may suffice as evidence. The argument of this Prolusion is echoed in both his 1642 *The Reason of Church Government* and his 1645 *Tetrachordon*, when Milton writes, "No morall nature can endure either in the actions of Religion, or study of wisdome, without sometime slackning the cords of intense thought and labour… We cannot therefore alwayes be contemplative, or pragmaticall abroad, but have need of som delightfull intermission, wherin the enlarg'd sould may leav off a while her severe schooling; and like a glad youth in wandring vacancy, may keep her hollidaies to joy and harmless pastime."[249] Milton recognizes the temptations of idle play but he also sees its benefits for work and study, remembering warmly the vacancy of his youth.

Indeed, "play" is at the center of a seventeenth-century controversy, about which Milton is strangely ambivalent in his early years. Soon after Milton argues for the utility of play in *Prolusion 6*, Charles I re-releases the *Book of Sports* (1633), which encouraged games and the rites of May on the Sabbath.[250] For its encouragement of play—the wrong type of idle behavior, as opposed to prayer and reading the Bible—Puritans attacked this legislation. Such criticism often linked these games and celebrations to pagan and

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[248] Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis*, 142. She refers, in this passage, to John Hale's comments in *Milton's Cambridge Latin: Performing in the Genres, 1625-1632* (Temple, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005).

[249] Likewise, in *The Reason of Church Government*, he writes "the spirit of man cannot demean itself lively in this body without some recreating intermission of labor and serious things, it were happy for the commonwealth if our magistrates … would take into their care … the managing of our public sports and festival pastimes … such as may inure and harden our bodies … and may civilize, adorn, and make discreet our minds." See Milton, "The Reason of Church-Government," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 736-861, 819-820. In this passage, he refers explicitly to the *Book of Sports*. See below.

[250] See Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Catholic practices, and as Kilgour notes, it's "puzzling" that only a few years earlier in *Prolusion* 6, Milton justifies play with the example of the Floralia, a supposed source of May Day: "while it is possible that he is simply unaware of or uninterested in such issues, or is unperturbed by the current implications of an innocent analogy, he could be adopting a provocatively conservative opinion."[251] It seems unlikely that Milton, whose anxieties about his own leisurely activity thoroughly pervade his early poetry, did not care about this issue. In 1642 Milton is more critical of the *Book of Sports*, viewing the decree as authorizing "provocations of drunkenness and lust";[252] however, even then, he does not condemn "public sports, and festival pastimes" so long as they encourage "love and practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude."[253] Milton's politics are less overt in the early 1630s, but we still might expect that he sympathized with the Puritan opinion on this matter. His silence may speak volumes: a reluctance to renounce such play.

As Milton prepares to declare himself a poet in the 1645 *Poems*, this anxiety persists, and Milton, who trusts that his poetic composition will be viewed as a worthy use of time, now confronts the question of what poetry counts for *honestum otium*, i.e. what poetry can be turned into service for the commonwealth. A few years before the *Poems*, for example, in his *Reason of Church Government Urg'd against Prelaty*, Milton promises an epic "not to be rays'd from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at wast from the pen of some vulgar Amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite."[254] Milton criticizes, specifically, the "vulgar" love poet and versifying

[251] Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis*, 152.
[252] See Milton, "The Reason of Church-Government," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 819-820.
[253] Ibid. See also Marcus, *The Politics*, 170.
[254] See Milton, "Reason of Church-Government," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 820.

"parasite" but the fact that he supplies love poetry as an example of "wast" inspired by the "heat of youth" and "wine" matters. It suggests an anxiety, with its basis in early modern culture, regarding the use of poetry and whether composing poetry, especially love poetry, is a good way to spend one's spare time.[255] Indeed, elsewhere, when discussing Charles' retirement at Westminster, Milton echoes the common claim that poetry isn't worth a gentleman's time.[256] Here, he defends poetry's ability to "inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility"[257] but grants condemnation of lyric and amatory "toys" and poetic composition as "play," "sport," and *otium*.[258] The Puritan attacks on poetry in the late sixteenth century, such as Stephen Gosson's that inspires Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetry*, continued into the seventeenth century, and Puritan critics of the *Book of Sports* under James and Charles were often the same critics of such poetry.[259] In fact, the "playing" encouraged by the early Stuarts was implicitly related to poetic play, especially pastoral, in that James and

[255] Criticisms of poetry, moreover, wasn't limited to condemnation of "feigning" in or immorality of drama, which William Prynne addresses in the 1633 "Histrio-Mastix" and which factors into the closing of theatres in 1642. See, Russell Fraser, *The War Against Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
[256] See Peter C. Herman, "Milton and the Muse-Haters: '*Ad Patrem*,' '*L'Allegro*/*Il Penseroso*,' and the Ambivalences of Poetry," *Criticism* 37, no. 1 (1995): 37-56. Herman cites the dedication in George Chapman's *Seven Books of the Iliads of Homer*: poetry is "far unworthy the serious expense of an exact gentleman's time. See also Steven N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649-1689* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 39.
[257] According to Milton, poetry can "inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church, to sing the victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ, to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship" (Hughes 669-70). See also Milton's defense of poetry in his *De Idea Platonica*.
[258] Poetry is consider the product or fruit of leisure. As Vickers notes, Constantijn Huygens, for example, even calls the collection of poems that he wrote on the side of his political career *Otia*. See Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 147.
[259] Marcus, *The Politics*, 8.

Charles sought to "repastoralize" England.[260] Consequently, despite writing his own poems about love and other trifles, Milton develops a desire to compose on serious, divine, and epic matters. These matters make for *honestum otium*. But, in 1645 as he sets out to declare Virgil and Ovid his models and to pursue epic, he must reconcile his time spent composing the youthful and idle genres of pastoral and elegy. Perhaps in his previous claims that work and play can coexist beneficially, we can sense his reluctance to relinquish activities of idle leisure, which include both play and poetic composition.

In the 1645 *Poems*, this reluctance displays itself in several poems outside of the elegiac book, including the twinned "*L'Allegro*" and "*Il Penseroso*" poems. In "*L'Allegro*" Milton embraces a playful and idle leisure, how "young and old come forth to play / On a sunshine holiday."[261] He beckons Mirth to come to him and bring with her "Jest and youthful Jollity, / Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles / … Sport that wrinkled Care derides, / And Laughter holding both his sides" (26-7, 31-2). In "*Il Penseroso*," Milton desires isolation for contemplation "far from all resort of mirth" (81). He imagines himself, for example, "in some high lonely tower," and views "gorgeous Tragedy," in contrast with Comedy, as his entertainment (86, 97). Thus he hopes to spend his life, "till old experience do attain / To something like Prophetic strain" (173-4). Some scholars have taken these poems to represent Milton's rejection of mirth and play in favor of sober and studious seriousness. More likely, however, the poems are complementary. They

[260] Marcus, *The Politics*, 19. James' initial support of sportive pastimes in his *Basilikon Doron* even cites Horace's *Ars Poetica* as justification: *omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci*. See also Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 160. James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1660* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 153-85, especially 177.
[261] John Carey (ed.), "*L'Allegro*," *Milton's Minor Poems*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education LTD, 2007), 134-151, ll. 97-8. Subsequent references to Milton's poetry will refer parenthetically to the line numbers of this edition.

represent a cycle of attitudes, as the opening of each poem demonstrates: "Hence loathed Melancholy" and "Hence vain, deluding Joys."[262] Each poem represents the movement from one attitude to another, which seems to reflect Milton's own experience. Rather than a rejection of *levitas* for *gravitas*, we may sense in these poems a recurring conflict between a dutiful desire for seriousness and a youthful embrace of play. This conflict is to some extent about *otium*. In fact, its two sides appear in these poems. In "*L'Allegro*," Milton endorses a recreational play that intentionally invokes pastoral *otium*, in which "a shepherd tells his tale beneath the hawthorn" and "Corydon and Thyrsis first met" (67-8, 83). In "*Il Penseroso*," he banishes this leisure and invites, instead, "retired Leisure," time for contemplation and study. "*L'Allegro*" leads the reader through a comedy, while "*Il Penseroso*" tours tragedy. Milton invites Mirth, in "*L'Allegro*," to "trip it as ye go / On the light fantastic toe" (33-4) like the light measures of elegy, while Melancholy walks "with even step, and musing gait" (38) resembling epic.[263] Thus, we can perhaps see Milton's assertions elsewhere of the complementary nature of work and play as an attempt to reconcile the conflicting desires in these twin poems. Certainly, Milton's fluctuation between serious and playful poems in the 1645 collection, especially its English half, suggests it was an ongoing conflict.

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[262] *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* possess a "cyclical form," as Leonora Leet Brodwin states, "as narrated by a unified persona." See Brodwin, "Milton and the Renaissance Circe," *Milton Studies* 6 (1975), 21-83, especially 45-6. Brodwin too sees these poems as addressing a "carefree life" as a "threat to a higher dedication." See also, Leslie Brisman, "All Before Them Where to Choose': '*L'Allegro*' and '*Il Penseroso*,'" *JEGP* 71 (1972), 226-40, especially 228. Cf. Martz, who claims the poems "develop a linear, sequential effect, moving from youthful hedonism toward the philosophic, contemplative mind" in *The Poet of Exile*, 45-46.

[263] Revard, *Milton and The Tangles*, 92 and, especially, 122-3. Revard significantly suggests that "so entirely indeed do the festive poet's habits [of "*Elegia* 6"] and preferences in the elegy agree with Allegro's in the ode, and the epic poets with Penseroso's, that we may suspect that Milton's true agenda in the twin odes "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" has more to do with poetics than with a simple differentiation of lifestyles." She views the rejection of "*Il Penseroso*" as one of light-hearted elegy (and we might add comedy and pastoral) for epic (and tragedy).

More frequently in the *Poems*, however, Milton has selected works that present him as withdrawing from or rejecting idle leisure and its associated poetry. Repeatedly, when Milton declares his poetic vocation, he feels the need to justify poetic composition, at least of serious subjects, as a worthy activity. Particularly, in *Ad Patrem*, Milton defends his poetic vocation to his father, who "scorns" [*contemnere*] the sacred muses (56). Little reason is given why his father despises poetry, besides the claim that it is fruitless and worthless ("*vanas*" and "*inopes*"), but we might attribute his scorn to some of the usual criticisms of poetry (57).[264] In reply, Milton asserts poetry's ability to show man's "divine origins, the seeds of heaven" (18). Moreover, he provides precedent for its respectable nature and use, including its prophetic origins, role in royal banquets, and its connection to music, his father's art. Yet, Milton is still anxious about his time spent in "the delightful leisure [*otia*] of the Aonian banks" (75). His defense, notably, is for *divinum carmen*, divine song (17), and poets who sing "the deeds of heroes and their acts worthy of emulation, chaos as well as the broad foundations on which the earth was set" (46-7). Thus, we should note, that Milton begins the poem by renouncing his trifling poetry. "Now I should desire the Pierian fountains to direct their streams through my heart," Milton says, "so that my Muse may rise with emboldened wings, forgetting her meagre songs [*tenues sonos*] in her duty [*officium*] to honour my father" (1-2, 4-5). As the muses direct their water to inspire Milton, he directs his attention from poems that are "*tenues*," a term associated with elegiac, love, and lyric poetry, to his filial *officium*, his

[264] *Vanas* and *inopes* reiterate claims of poetry's worthlessness, its waste of time. Herman suggests that *vanas*' connotation as lying and deceptive is meant to recall the charges to which Sidney replies in his *Defense of Poesy*. See Herman, "Milton and the Muse-Haters." See also, Herman, "'Do as I Say, Not as I Do': The Apology for Poetry and Sir Philip Sidney's Letters to Edward Denny and Robert Sidney," *The Sidney Newsletter* 10, no. 1 (1989): 13-24.

duty to his father. Notably, this poem, too, is in heavy hexameter verse. *Ad Patrem*, so much as it memorializes his father or defends poetry, declares Milton's vocation once more. It marks his transition from meagre measures to grave verse and *officius* subjects. Thus, as the poem nears its end, Milton declares, "I, who already have a part among the learned troop, though the lowest, shall one day sit among those clad in the ivy and the laurels of victory" (101-2). His poetic declaration and focus on new subjects, Milton seems to believe, grants him a privileged status that can assuage his anxieties and frustrate detractors: "Now I shall no longer take part, unrecognized, in the idle crowd. My path will evade the eyes of the ignorant. Be far hence, you wakeful worries [*vigiles curae*]. Be gone, you complaints [*querelae*]" (103-5). He banishes, from himself, *vigiles curae* and *querelae*, whose ambiguity may denote his actual concerns as well as the subjects of elegy and love poetry. Indeed, *querelae* and *vigiles* are terms associated with elegy, particularly its *paraclausithyra*. "*Procul este,*" he says, in an attempt to renounce this sort of poetry, "be gone." He separates himself from the poetic leisure of youth.

Milton makes a similar move to separate himself from this sort of poetry in his cover page and, almost paradoxically, in his pastoral poetry. His anxiety about his poetic vocation and detractors may very well be why, when Milton presents himself as a "*futura vates*" or bard-to-be in the collection's epigraph, he asks for protection from any evil tongue. This quotation, which is drawn from Virgil's *Eclogues*, is the first sign that implies Milton will follow a Virgilian *cursus* to epic, though it also suggests he will begin in the *otiosus* realm of pastoral. An ambiguous portrait of Milton on the following page seems to support this trajectory. In it, the engraver depicts Milton (supposedly) in his 21st year in front of a window, and through this window are several shepherds, including one

playing a pipe in the shade of a tree. As many scholars have noted, however, there is a peculiar divide in this image, not just in its depiction of Milton, perhaps, as a gentleman poet despite his burgeoning partisan politics. More so, it is an image of division between the poet and his subject: on the left is the stern poet indoors while on the right is his playful subject, outside. Moreover, we do not truly see a young poet here. He looks remarkably older, as Martz suggests: "the harsh crabbed image of a man who might be forty or fifty."[265] Appropriately, Melpomene and Urania, the muses of "maturer" poets who represent tragedy and the heavens, are beside him, as Richard Johnson notes.[266] Framing the playful shepherds is Erato, the muse of youth and love, and Clio, who as Johnson fails to note is not only the muse of history but the muse that guards the Castalian spring and is sometimes the muse of poetry more generally. In the foreground of the *Poems* and before any works have even been shared, Milton declares his serious nature with youthful subjects not only separate from but also behind him.

This portrait, which I believe Milton influences, is his projection from 1645 on to his youth. It is his idea of the developing poet separate from *otium* such as that of pastoral, which he cultivates through the selection of his poetry. He imposes this image on his youthful poetry, which, despite his revisions and selection, however, betrays his struggle to leave this *otium* behind. Notably, Milton even rejects "otiose" elements in his pastoral songs. As Thomas Rosenmeyer remarks, *otium* "is the condition under which the herdsmen operate, the social and psychological characteristics of their world."[267] Pastoral

[265] Martz, "The Rising Poet, 1645," 6.
[266] Richard Johnson, "The Politics of Publication: Misrepresentation in Milton's 1645 *Poems*," *Criticism*, 36, no. 1 (1994): 45-71.
[267] Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet*, 68.

represents an *otium* of the golden age, a leisure "without toil or anxiety," usually at noon when goatherds (especially) rest in the shade from the hot sun.[268] Indeed, this *otium* is what the *Poems*' frontispiece displays, a shepherd resting and piping beneath the shade of a tree, and what "*L'Allegro*" even celebrates. However, in the pastoral of the 1645 *Poems*, we actually find no shepherds at play. This exclusion is especially important since, as many scholars have noted, Milton announces in the *Poems* a Virgilian career; yet, "*Arcades*" is the lightest pastoral song in the collection. In his "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," with which he opens the *Poems* and which some scholars view as his version of Virgil's *Eclogue 4* (the messianic eclogue), Milton approaches this pastoral leisure but he associates it with their ignorance of Christ:

> The shepherds on the lawn,
> Or ere the point of dawn
> Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
> Full little thought they then,
> That the mighty Pan
> Was kindly come to live with them below;
> Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
> Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep. (85-92)

These shepherds' occupation with thoughts of love and sheep, their emphatic simplicity and silliness, and their idleness (sitting and chatting) mark them as the shepherds of pastoral. It is not until the music of the spheres "their souls in blissful rapture took" that this leisure is interrupted (98). The coming of Christ seizes and displaces their ignorant cares. Indeed, this moment of interrupted leisure echoes in Milton's other pastoral poems, as Milton represents shepherds *relinquishing* pastoral *otium* rather than embracing it.

[268] Ibid., 75-6.

The rest of Milton's pastoral poems in the 1645 collection are more faithful to their pastoral and bucolic predecessors; however, what are usually passing concerns of pastoral—death, banishment, loss—become the central concerns of Milton's pastoral. They relinquish the typical pastoral play to mourn. "Lycidas," Milton's funeral elegy to Edward King, begins with a description of pastoral life while Lycidas was still alive: "the rural ditties were not mute, / Tempered to the oaten flute, / Rough satyrs danced, and fauns with cloven heel, / From the glad sound would not be absent long / And old Damaetas loved to hear our song" (32-6). But Lycidas' death brings about a "heavy change" (37). It causes "the uncouth swain" (186), in search of fame, to ask, "What boots it with uncessant care / To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade, / And strictly meditate the thankless muse, / Were it not better done as others use, / To sport with Amaryllis in the shade, / Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair?" (64-9).[269] He asks what profit there is in pastoral work (by analogy, priestly work), whether it may be more rewarding to "sport" in pastoral love poetry, until he is reminded "to scorn delights and live laborious days" (72). This labor is not for fame "on mortal soil" but in "those pure eyes" of heaven (78, 81). *Epitaphium Damonis,* his funeral elegy to Charles Diodati, also emphasizes this abandonment of pastoral leisure. Its refrain "*Ite domum impasti, domino iam non vacat, agni,*" "go home, unfed lambs; your master has no time for you,"[270] suggests that Damon's death has inspired its singer to relinquish pastoral. Indeed,

[269] My reading, that he compares priestly work with poetic *otium*, follows Revard's reading of his "sporting" as poetic but differs in its emphasis of the type of activity: work vs. play. See Revard, *Milton and the Tangles*, 9: "When Milton remarks in "Lycidas" how he might — "as others use" — have sported "with Amaryllis in the shade, / or with the tangles of Neaera's hair," (68-9) he is alluding not just to hypothetical mistresses but also to the career as a neo-Latin elegiac poet that he at first contemplated and for a while followed."

[270] This line finds its origins in Virgil's *Eclogue* 7, where the book's epigraph is taken from. Both are spoken by Thyrsis, who comes to represent a Miltonic persona.

Milton's *non vacat* does not merely denote that he has no "time" to play the shepherd but, more accurately, no leisure. Throughout the poem, shepherds with conventional names borrowed from major classical and Renaissance pastoral try to call him back. The nymphs even remind him that he is inappropriately serious for his youth. "By right," they say, "youth seeks out dances; it seeks out levity [*leves*] and games [*lusus*]; it always seeks out love" (85-6). But these voices fall on deaf ears. Instead, Damon's death urges him to more serious matters, a great song on a British theme (171). In both of these works, Milton depicts the shepherd singer in a pastoral landscape departing from its leisure and turning toward new, more serious duties. Martz reads the 1645 collection and *Epitaphium Damonis* in particular as Milton's "farewell to pastoral and his youth," but pastoral and youthful *otium* is what Milton turns away from, more than anything else.

From this reluctant relinquishing of and displacement from youthful *otium* and poetry, Milton develops a sympathy with the figure of exile, disconnected from his or her native locale. Indeed, Milton can empathize with other aspects of exile as well. In the Old Testament as well as Ovid's *Tristia*, Milton finds a displacement with which he sympathizes, a dislocation of place, language, and self.[271] After his poem "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Milton opens the collection with 2 psalms on the exodus of Israelites, which praise the Lord for quelling the toils of the displaced sons of Jacob. Likewise, as a model for his elegies, Milton looks at love elegy through the eyes of the *Tristia*, wherein Ovid describes his experience in Tomis while yearning to return to Rome, contemplating his once Roman identity, and pondering his now useless Latin.

[271] Informing these texts, too, are actual accounts of and knowledge of those exiled for dissent during these period. See Christopher D'Addario, *Exile and Journey*, 91-2.

Linguistic conflict is at the heart of Milton's book too, a volume that Milton describes as twinned ["*gemelle*"] for its Latin and English split.[272] Bilingual editions by one author are rare during the period,[273] and Milton's organization reflects the grammar school's "hierarchical division between 'mother' and 'father' tongues," English and Latin.[274] As Milton repeatedly declares that he will sing epic, we're left to wonder which language he will choose for this song. In *Epitaphium Damonis*, some scholars view Milton saying farewell to both pastoral and Latin but, as Estelle Haan shows, he merely meditates which language to choose. Even if his pipe (*fistula*) were transformed by his *patriis camoenis*, native muses (169-70), we should remember that "his vernacular is in fact a Latin that has undergone a linguistic metamorphosis … or rather (as though mirroring the rebirth of Diodati in heaven) a linguistic apotheosis," a "Latinate English."[275] His choice of language for this epic is furthermore connected to issues of national identity, since he chooses the origins of Britain as a subject instead of *omnia*, "all things." "One can not do everything," Milton says in explanation of his British theme, "one can not hope to do everything." This consideration, as I understand it, gestures toward a debate between the national and universal themes, the Virgilian and the Ovidian, the British and the

[272] "*Ad Joannem Rousium Oxoniensis Academiae Bibliothecarim*," l. 1.
[273] John K. Hale, "Milton's Self-Presentation in *Poems* … 1645," *Milton Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1991): 37-48, especially 38. See also, Hale, *Milton's Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 21: "Bilingual volumes by divers hands abounded, since Oxford and Cambridge burst into multilingual print with anthologies whenever princes were born or married, died or stubbed the royal toe. … Nonetheless, volumes of verse composed by a single author and assembled into a book by the author remained rare in the England of 1645."
[274] On this division, see Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 15. Milton recalls this hierarchical division himself in his Prolusion 6, acknowledging the impropriety of fixing English verse to its end: "Now I will overleap the University Statutes as if they were the wall of Romulus and run off from Latin into English." Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 286.
[275] Estelle Haan, "The 'Adorning of My Native Tongue': Latin Poetry and Linguistic Metamorphosis," *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 51-65, especially 63.

divine.[276] It resembles questions of British nationhood in the early seventeenth century, as "'an' or 'the' elect nation" that professes Protestantism.[277] John Baptista Manso's testimony in the 1645 *Poems* even raises the possibility of Milton's alignment declaring that he almost is "not an Angle but truly an Angel," that his devotion to God rivals his devotion to England.[278]

In the elegies, with their preexisting conflict over *otium* and *officium* and their exilic predecessors, Milton channels this crisis and, moreover, the collection's self-contradictions into a presentation of himself as a self-imposed exile from idle *otium*. Exile, after all, is the subject of the first elegy in the collection, a position reserved for "programmatic" declarations. In the first elegy of the *Monobiblos*, Propertius announces that *Amor* has conquered him and that Cynthia will be the subject of his book; in Tibullus' first elegy, Tibullus declares he'll shun *labor* for *inertia* so long as he can be with his Delia; and in the first elegy of the *Amores*, Ovid renounces his epic ambitions to serve Cupid. In contrast, Milton's first elegy of the *Elegiarum Liber* depicts Milton's banishment from Cambridge to London and his abrupt decision to return to school. Rather than merely recording "Milton's fascination with the world of elegy to which as both poet and lover he refuses to commit himself,"[279] Milton ironically turns to the last of

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[276] Milton sets up a similar dichotomy in *Ad Patrem* that explicitly pairs heroic epic with epic of chaos and the foundation of the world, "chaos, et fundamina mundi." Cf, Ovid, *Metamorphoses I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), "origine mundi" (l. 3) the origin of the world, which begins in a state "quem dixere chaos," that is called chaos.

[277] Elizabeth Sauer, *Milton, Toleration, and Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 12. See also, Thomas N. Corns, "Ideology in the *Poemata* (1645)," *Milton Studies* 19 (1984): 195-203, which navigates this issue in *Q. Nov.* and *Elegia Quarta*.

[278] John Milton, *Poems*, (London, 1645) *Early English Books Online*,, http://gateway.proquest.com.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99862558, 65^{v}: "*Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, mos, si pietas sic, / Non Anglus, verum hercle Angelus ipse fores*." This conflict will arise in Milton's criticism of England in his *Elegia Quarta* as well as his peculiar praise of James in *Q. Nov*.

[279] Revard, *Milton and the Tangles*, 16.

Ovid's elegiac collections. He chooses these poems for their chasteness. Indeed, these are the poems in which Ovid renounces and regrets his love poetry. "*Vita verecunda est, musa iocosa mea*," he writes in his defence, "Jocund was my muse, but my life was chaste."[280] By using Ovid's final elegies as models for his first elegy, Milton can make both his life and his muse chaste; he can skip the role of the amorist that sabotaged Ovid's epic (as Milton claims in *Elegia* 1). Just as he focuses on the tradition of pastoral elegy to assert his relinquishment of *otium*, Milton focuses on the tradition of exilic elegy to show his restraint. He has not left his youth or its genres to pursue epic quite yet, as he will in *Epitaphium Damonis*. In the elegies that follow, including "*Elegia Quinta*" in which Milton celebrates spring, Milton continues to present himself as an exile from youthful *otium*, a perpetual and self-imposed outsider.

Milton's "*Elegia Prima*" depicts his "*exilium"* (17) from Cambridge to London, followed by an abrupt decision to return to Cambridge. Written as a letter to Charles Diodati, which in elegiac verse already invokes Ovid's epistolary *Tristia*, Milton declares that he is in his "*patria*" (10), which the Thames bathes with its waves, with all its delights and that he does not desire to return to Cambridge. "If this be exile [*exilium*]," he remarks, "to go to my native home [*patrios Penates*], to follow pleasing leisure [*otia*] without care, I neither flee the name nor reject its fate. Gladly I enjoy my exile [*exilii conditione*]" (17-20). In Cambridge are stark conditions, not suitable for a poet. Milton remarks, "its bare fields, producing no soft shades [*umbras molles*], do not please me. How poorly that place becomes a worshipper of Phoebus" (13-4). There, Milton finds no beauty and no *umbra*—a term associated with *otium*, in which one may recline and rest

[280] Ovid, *Tristia - Ex Ponto*, 80, 2.354.

from work,[281] and this lack of *otium* is improper for a poet, a worshipper of Phoebus. In contrast, London provides *otia* and *tempora libera* (25), which he can devote to his books and his poetry.[282] This claim invokes Ovid's words in the *Tristia*'s own opening poem, that *carmina secessum scribentis et otia quaerunt*, "poetry requires the writer to be in privacy and ease." Moreover, in London, Milton can visit the theatre or the shades (*umbra*) of elms where parties of young women walk by, women more beautiful than any of Greece's, Rome's, or Ovid's *Heroides*. His exile, which previous scholars have attributed to (an unfounded) penal rustication perhaps by his tutor William Chappell, is more likely a university vacation. He uses the term ironically. Not only is London a place of ease, while Cambridge is a place of harshness, Milton declares London his *patria*. His *exilium*, jokingly, is a complete reversal of Ovid's from his *patria* Rome to the harsh Tomis, a "cross-comparison" between his first elegy and Ovid's first in the *Tristia*.[283] Milton draws attention to this himself, remarking "would that the bard — that tearful exile in the fields of Tomis — never had to bear anything heavier [*graviora*]. Then he would not yield to Ionian Homer, and, bested by him, principal praise would not be yours, Virgil" (23-4). These words repeat a sentiment that Ovid himself makes throughout the *Tristia*, in 1.1 as well as 3.4 for example, when he suggests that the *Metamorphoses* wasn't finished and would have "gained a more secure name from [his]

[281] On the relationship between *umbra* and *otium*, see Vickers, "Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance," 24.
[282] This reversal of *otium* in a natural space for that of the city, I believe, leads Bruce Boehrer to argue that *Elegia Prima* "enacts a deliberate turn away from the setting, inspiration, and language of pastoral verse." See Boehrer, "The Rejection of Pastoral in Milton's '*Elegia Prima,*'" *Modern Philology* 99, no. 2 (2001): 181-200, especially 185.
[283] See R. W. Condee, "Ovid's Exile and Milton's Rustication," *PQ* 37(1958): 598-602. See also Condee, *Structure in Milton's Poetry: From the Foundation to the Pinnacles* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), 22-7. See also Estelle Haan, "Milton's *Elegia Quarta* and Ovid: Another 'Cross-Comparison,'" *Notes and Queries* (December 2007): 400-404.

finishing hand."[284] But Milton's invocation of Ovid's exile in "*Elegia Prima*" is meant to poke fun of his own use of the term, in that he has been exiled to his *patria*, a setting ironically similar to that which inspired Ovid's *carmen et error*. Moreover, as we'll soon see, Milton can leave his exile freely.

Just as Rome and its theatres provided the leisure and setting in which Ovid and Propertius could compose love poetry, Milton finds himself tempted by similar conditions. He begins by declaring that in London's *otium* his books, which are his life ("*mea vita*"), have seized him entirely (26). *Mea vita*, as Revard has noted, is a term for the elegiac beloved, which Milton instead adapts for his books. However, Milton reveals that studying is not all that he pursues in this city of delights. Theatre also steals away his free time, and Milton's juxtaposition of *sinuosi theatri* with the *puellae* of the grove recalls Ovid's and Propertius' Rome, where the theatre is a place for "girl-watching" (27).[285] Milton slowly approaches the poem that a reader might expect to begin a book of elegies, one in which *Amor* or Cupid seizes the poet in this grove with darts, making him a reluctant servant. He marvels "how often have I been stunned by a marvel of worthy beauty, able to renew Jove's youth" and describes their beauties (54). The poem climaxes as Milton exclaims, "Let not Ovid boast of Pompey's Colonnade or the theatres full of Italian matrons. The chief glory is owed to the maids of Britain" (69-71). "London," he says, addressing his *patria*, "you are most fortunate to possess whatever beauty there is to be found in all this pendant world, closed within your walls" (75-6). This declaration marks the acme of the poem, Milton's forceful assertion in which he compares himself to

[284] See Ovid, *Tristia - Ex Ponto*, 154-5 & 4-7, 3.14.22 & 1.1.45-8.
[285] Cf., *Propertius* 4.1.15, *sinuosa cavo pendebant vela theatro* and, more importantly, *Ars Amatoria* 1.89, where Ovid suggests the theatre for this activity. See Revard, *Milton and the Tangles*, 14.

Ovid as a patriotic poet of love. Whereas Ovid declares the superiority of Rome's women in the *Ars Amatoria,* Milton contends with him for London.

This bold contention, in regard to poetics, however, is quickly and purposely deflated. Just as we might expect Cupid to rear his head in this grove of *puellae* to pierce Milton's heart with a dart and force him to write love poetry, Milton bathetically declares, "But I, while the blind boy's indulgence permits, am preparing to forsake [*linquere*] this fortunate town as soon as possible" (85-6). This sudden *recusatio* recalls the opening of *Amores* 1.1, when Ovid's epic intentions are set aside for love elegy, except now (in contrast) Milton recuses himself from love poetry.[286] As Revard says, "The hunter Cupid with his nets has been prowling amatory forests since antiquity. We expect him to work his arts, to draw forth an arrow, to address the young poet. Milton has, after all, done his homework on Ovid and Propertius, so he knew what should have happened at this point. But it does not." The poem becomes, as Revard argues, a "deferral of love" and, possibly, "love poetry."[287] However, I argue that it is more than just that. What Milton fears, more than love and love poetry, is its trapping idleness. He worries that a *puella* will replace his *libra* as "*mea vita*," that love's idle *otium* will replace studious *otium*. The *mollitas* of London is less conducive for study than the *duritas* of Cambridge. Rather, it is a city of delights, whose theatre and love, so much as Ovid's Rome or Augustine's Carthage, tempts Milton to idle leisure. London, Milton concludes, is like the "infamous halls of the wanton [*malefidae*] Circe," whose magic feasts transformed men into beasts (87-8). He intends "with the aid of divine Moly," which

[286] Accompanying this thematic echo is a verbal one: Milton's preparation *paro* and Ovid's *parabam*.
[287] Revard, *Milton and the Tangles*, 16.

Odysseus used to protect himself from Circe's magic, to shun or escape ["*vitare*"] these halls for harsh University ["*racuae Scholae*"] (88, 90). This last declaration turns the first half of the poem on its head. After he recognizes his *patria*'s temptations, Milton's "exile" transforms into a self-imposed banishment from his *patria* to the rough and harsh Cambridge, where his state will more closely resemble Ovid's in Tomis. Moreover, Milton's rejection of love poetry and London protects him from a similar *carmen et error* for which Ovid was punished. As the first poem of the collection, he declares his poetic program to not simply defer love but write chaste poems in exile from leisure. Rather than a reluctant poet-lover like Ovid and Propertius, he becomes a reluctant poet of exile.

In the two elegies that follow, as Milton relocates himself to the harshness of Cambridge, his subject changes as well. In the first elegy, one of springtime and love, Milton creates a conflict between two traditions of elegy, love and exile, that hinges on *otium*. Having chosen exile and Cambridge, Milton appropriately turns in his next poems to more serious subjects: winter and death. We find less of the exiled *persona* in these poems but his concern remains the same, though now focused on the antithesis of *otium*: *officium*. The next elegy, a short one, memorializes the beadle of Cambridge. The poem slowly develops into an argument, which declares his obedience and utility in his duty ("*officio*") as a marker of being "*dignus*" or worthy (4, 6-7). Milton argues by analogy that the beadle, like Mercury and Eurybates, was an obedient messenger and emphasizes his worth by asking *Mors* why a useless burden ("*inutile pondus*") had not been seized instead (19). Therefore ("*igitur*")—because he was dutiful—, Milton pleads Academe to mourn his death (21-2). In "*Elegia Tertia*," Milton mourns the death of Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, and discovers consolation in his eternal life in heaven.

Milton laments the dreadful power of death and then falls asleep to be visited by a vision. In this dream, he walks through a meadow until he discovers a god-like Winchester before him. The angels call upon him, and in their words Milton realizes that death is not cruel ["*fera*"] (16) but liberating: "Come, my son, and, fortunate, seize the joys of your native land (*patrii*). Henceforth, my son, rest [*vaca*] ever free from cruel toil [*duro labore*]" (64). It brings forth a world of earned leisure, of "thick shade [*densas umbras*] beneath the clustering vines," and of relief from hard work. Moreover, Milton composes the poem as an adaptation of Ovid's *Amores* 1.5, comparing love elegy's amatory joys with heaven's divine joys ["*gaudia*"] and rejecting Ovid's mid-day leisure for his sad but golden repose ["*aurea quies*"] (66).[288]

As a book-end to these funeral elegies and at the exact center of the collection, Milton returns to Ovid's exile poetry in a clearer declaration of his exilic persona. His "*Elegia Quarta*" depicts Milton's instructions to a letter regarding where to go and what to say to Thomas Young, his former tutor. Milton implies that Young has left England by necessity, like many non-conforming ministers, to Hamburg, where The Thirty Years War was approaching. Milton repeatedly apologizes for his *segnes moras* (3), "idle delays," during which he had not written to his tutor, and repents by offering consolation to the unfortunate Young. He ends the poem by advising his exiled tutor to seek comfort in God, like so many biblical refugees. Milton models this poem on Ovid's *Tristia* 3.7,

[288] Milton's opening lines combine those of both *Amores* 1.5, in which he and Corinna make love at mid-day, and 3.5, in which he has a dream vision. Whereas the opening lines of 1.5 identify *aestus*, the heat of the mid-day and Ovid's passion, Milton identifies his *moestus*, grief. Both Corinna and Winchester appear to the poet, almost as if deities, and both poems end with a similar jussive subjunctive. For a reading of *Elegia Tertia* with *Amores* 1.5, see John Hale, "Milton Playing with Ovid," *Milton Studies* 25 (1989): 3-19, especially 10-12.

whose subtext reveals his purpose. Whereas Ovid writes to his student, Perilla, Milton reverses 3.7 as the former student writing to his exiled tutor, who first unveiled the Muses to Milton. Milton thus transforms the poem into one of his poetic initiation identifying his *praeceptores* and poetic model as Young and, moreover, the Ovid of exile. In fact, Milton even adapts Ovid's advice to Perilla in *Tristia* 3.7, to shirk idleness and love poetry, and challenges the authority of the *praeceptores* with his own advice. Framing exile with biblical precedent, Milton affirms his relinquishment of idle *otium*, declares himself a chaste Ovidian exile, and identifies himself as a Christian poet.

Although "*Elegia Quarta*" depicts Young's state in (a supposed) exile, the poem's truly focuses on how Young's banishment is, for Milton, a form of self-division, an exile of/from part of himself. Whether Young was actually exiled is uncertain but Milton suggests as much,[289] remarking "Beggarly, you seek in a foreign seat the support which your native land [*patrii penates*] refuses" (85-6) He continues by figuring Young's citizenship as a familial relationship to England: "Home [*patria*], you harsh parent [*dura parens*], more cruel than the white cliffs of your shore, beaten by foaming waves, is it proper that you should turn out harmless children like this?" (87-9). Any patriotism found elsewhere in the *Poems* falls away as he chides his *patria* and accuses it of subverting the intent of God, the true father: "Thus do you compel them, hard-hearted land, driving them onto strange soil and suffering that they seek nourishment in remote countries, they whom God Himself had sent to you in foresight, they who bring glad tidings from heaven and who teach which path leads to the stars after death?" (89-94). In these lines Milton

[289] Shawcross believes Young has been exiled and takes ll. 87-94 as evidence, referring to the Thirty-nine Articles and the requirement that ministers subscribe. See John T. Shawcross, "Form and Content in Milton's Latin Elegies," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1970): 331-50, especially 336.

establishes both Young's exile and his own alienation. He even goes so far as to say to his *patria*, "Truly you deserve to live confined to Stygian shades and to perish of an eternal hunger of the soul" (95). Young's supposed expulsion from his country for his beliefs, Milton implies, is like Elijah's expulsion in *1 Kings*, Paul's in Macedonia, and Jesus in Gergessa, who fled ["*effugit*"], were driven away ["*pellitur*"], and were ordered to leave ["*iussit abire*"] (102-4). Young has been exiled, and Milton, in his devotion to both Young and God, has been alienated from his country. Moreover, he feels that a part of himself has been exiled as well. "*Ille quidem est animae plusquam pars altera nostrae*," Milton remarks, "Truly, that man is more than the other part of my soul" (19). "*Dimidio vitae vivere cogor ego*," "I am forced to live a half life," Milton exclaims, "Ah! How many seas and how many mountains lying between us deprive me from my other half [*alia parte … mei*]" (20-1). Young, as Milton emphasizes, though he and Milton are perhaps now equals,[290] represents to him the time in his youth when he was first introduced to poetry. He is emphatically Milton's mentor, and Milton compares their relationship to that of Socrates and Alcibiades, Aristotle and Alexander, and Phoenix or Chiron to Achilles. Thus, Young's exile and current danger abroad seems to Milton a threat to part of his youth and childhood.

This sentiment, generally, is what Milton is attempting to convey in this poem; however, he is also subtly developing the poem into an assumption of authority relative to Young, a declaration of equals. Throughout the poem, Milton recalls Young's role as a *praeceptor* and tutor but he also begins to declare his own worth, comparing himself in

[290] Milton, after all, borrows this phrase *animae dimidium meae* from Horace's *Odes* 1.3 in reference to Virgil. Milton seemingly compares his current relationship with Young to that between Horace and Virgil. See below.

ascending order to Alcibiades (of dubious greatness), Alexander (a hero among men), and Achilles (a demi-god). Rather than speaking to his *magister* with due deference, Milton instead uses the language of friendship, derived from works such as Cicero's *De Amicitia*, to portray them as equals. Young is "*dimidium vitae,*" half of his life, and "*parte alia mei,*" the other part of him, which recall early modern sayings that refer to one soul in two bodies, an *alter idem, alter ego,* or *alter ipse*. Milton alludes to one source in particular, Horace's *Odes* 1.3, in which Horace calls Virgil *animae dimidium meae*, half of his soul. The language and allusions in these lines establishes Young and Milton as peers, like Virgil and Horace, more so than a student and his tutor. Indeed, when the poem finishes, Milton ends with a sort of assertion of his authority, when he reverses the relationship of their youth and gives Young advice. Throughout the poem, Milton refers to his "*mora,*" his delay to "*officium*" (60). He is referring to how long it has taken him to write to Young in Hamburg but, given the context of the poem, Milton also refers to his own independence and authority.

Milton's relationship with Young as it is described through "*Elegia Quarta*" becomes especially significant as Milton develops an analogue between Ovid and Young. Milton adapts much of the premise, structure, and language of Ovid's *Tristia* 3.7. Each poem, for example, features a letter between a tutor and his student; each poem begins with the poet instructing his letter on its departure and what to say; and each poem ends with advice. In *Tristia* 3.7, Ovid reminisces of his poetic tutelage for the young Perilla, writing, "I was the first to guide [your wit] to the stream of Pegasus lest the rill of fertile water unhappily be lost. I was the first to discern this in the tender years of thy girlhood

when, as a father to his daughter, I was thy guide and comrade."[291] Milton likewise depicts such a relationship between him and Young, recalling, "I was the first to travel under his guidance to the Aonian retreats and sacred greens of the forked mountain. I drank from Pieria's springs and, by Clio's favor, I wet my happy mouth three times with pure Castalian wine" (29-32). Just as Ovid was first to show Perilla poetry, so was Young the first to show Milton.[292] Milton's real innovation in "*Elegia Quarta*," however, is his reversal of this relationship. Not only does it fit naturally with Milton's relationship with Young, the reversal also places Milton in the student position to Ovid, who is by imitation another *praeceptor* for Milton. Milton declares in this reversal that both Young and Ovid were his vatic initiators. What's more, Milton likely models this poem of poetic initiation on the *Tristia* for a reason. Young, who tutored Milton in or around 1618, when Milton was between the ages of 10 and 12, very likely would have turned first (or, at the very least, early) to Ovid's elegies for poetry. Indeed, in most curricula and schools, Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia* were the first poems used in students' lessons. At St. Paul's even, where Milton attended school, these works were used as early as fourth form to acquire vocabulary,[293] and Milton himself speaks of the abundance of "smooth elegiac poets" in school.[294] Milton's use of the *Tristia* reflects the fact that Ovid, indeed, was one

[291] Ovid, *Tristia*, 128-9, ll. 3.7.15-18.
[292] Haan calls this a cross-comparison, likening it to what Condee finds in "*Elegia Prima*" between Milton's fate and the Ovid's. See Haan, "Milton's *Elegia Quarta*" and Condee, "Ovid's Exile."
[293] For an example, see T. W. Baldwin, Vol. 1, 119-120. In order to acquire vocabulary at Paul's, "from 'moral matter' [students] proceeded gently into unmoral or immoral matter as represented by the *De Tristibus*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Epistles* of Ovid. These were to 'induce' the boys to poetry, and had long been standard works for that process. Consequently, the boys are already in the fourth form turning and proving verses, preparatory to beginning composition in verse in the fifth form, the first of upper school."
[294] See "An Apology Against a Pamphlet [Smectymnuus]," *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 1, 862-953, 889-890: "as the manner is, [I] was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended. ... others were the smooth elegiac poets, where of the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easy and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read, that no recreation came

of, if not the first of, the classical authors that Milton was exposed to. Thus, we see Milton looking back to his initiation in this poem, as guided by Young and likely Ovid as well, his current poetic model.

Finally, Milton's declaration of authority in relation to Young likewise announces his independence from Ovid. Just as Milton's advice to Young is a reversal of roles, it is also a reversal of *Tristia* 3.7, in which Ovid ends the poem by advising Perilla. The student now teaches the tutor. In *Tristia* 3.7, the exiled Ovid worries, "Perhaps by my example (how my little elegies hurt me), you too are followed by my punishment," and advises her, "Only let not man or woman learn to love by your verse. Therefore, expel your reasons for idleness [*desidiae*], learned girl. Return to your true arts and sacred calling."[295] Milton composes "*Elegia Quarta*" to some extent as an answer to this advice. By writing it, he has expelled his *segnes moras*, idle delays, and assumed his sacred calling as *vates*. Moreover, as the first four elegies have demonstrated, Milton has expelled love from his verse as well. Ovid's advice, however, does not end here. He has asked Perilla to resume writing poetry because "in brief we possess nothing that is not mortal except the blessings of heart and mind. Behold me, deprived of native land, of you and my home, reft of all that could be taken from me; my mind is nevertheless my

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to me better welcome. For that it was then those years with me which are excused though they be least severe, I may be sav'd the labour to remember ye. Whence having observed them to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections which under one or other name they took to celebrate, I thought with my self by every instinct and presage of nature which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task might with such diligence as they used embolden me … I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient, that if I found those authors [the elegists] anywhere speaking unworthy things of themselves; or unchaste of those names which before they had extolled, this effect it wrought with me: from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored; and above them all preferred the two famous renowners of *Beatrice and Laura* who never write but to honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts, without transgression."

[295] Ovid, *Tristia*, 128-9, 3.7.27-32.

comrade and my joy; over this Caesar could have no right. Let any you will end this life with cruel sword, yet when I am dead my fame shall survive."[296] Milton, instead, suggests to his exiled tutor to trust in God: "He will be your guardian, your champion" (112). Beyond the hope for eternal fame in poetry is, as Milton remarks in "Lycidas," fame in the eyes of heaven.[297]

The final three elegies of the collection depict a Milton in temptation, reasserting his devotion to serious poetry in "*Elegia Sexta*" between two poems on the coming of spring. "*Elegia Quinta*," the first of these poems, depicts not merely a celebration of spring, its *otium*, and its creative powers but also a melancholy meditation on its temporality and, in its reflection of the *Metamorphoses*, its deceptive setting of violence. Poems which feature celebrations of spring are common in Renaissance England and, like "*Elegia Quinta*," many "include a wish that spring might be eternal, that the golden age might return and resume its reign over the earth."[298] Milton's elegy, however conventional it may initially seem, is often considered the peak of his elegies and indeed his Latin poetry[299] for what some characterize as its expression of the imagination's transformative powers. Milton writes "a springtime of mythology itself."[300] The poem depicts Milton, inspired by spring and desire, describing the natural world and its gods

[296] Ovid, *Tristia*, 130-1, 3.7.43-50.
[297] See Haan, "Milton's *Elegia Quarta*," 404. Haan suggests that the cross-comparison with *Tristia* 3.7 draws out this ending. I agree with Haan here, though I believe this distinction is Milton's assertion of independence from Ovid and Young, which is given special significance in a poem that describes Milton's poetic initiation. See also Haan, "Bilingualism and Biculturalism: Cambridge and Beyond," *Both English and Latin: Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Milton's Neo-Latin Writings* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2012), 55-93.
[298] Revard, Milton and the Tangles, 26.
[299] See, for example, Shawcross, "Form and Content," 344.
[300] William Shullenberger, "Milton's Pagan Counterpoetic: Eros and Inspiration in Elegy 5," *To Repair the Ruins: Reading Milton*, ed. Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012), 41-76, especially 52.

awakening in May. He follows Apollo through the sky, Tellus' seductive speech, and the woodland deities' pursuit of nymphs. It is a world of love and leisure that resembles the golden age ["*aurea saecla*"] in its natural bliss, beauty, and opulence (135-6). However, behind this seeming perfection lurks Milton's grief as an onlooker and mere spectator of this *otium*, a sweet sadness resembling that of soft pastoral.[301] He has withheld himself in the last four poems from such *otium* and now, in his description of it, he refrains from participation. He, like rugged night in the poem, is separated from these activities, exiled ["*exulat*"] (34). His grief reveals itself in the description of the landscape as "*miseris terris*" and "*solos agros*" (135, 124), wretched lands and lonely fields, and his final injunction, in which there is more than a hint of sadness, "let springtime go slowly." Despite Milton's assertion in the first lines of time's infinite gyre, the final lines remind us of spring's temporality, that it will fade into winter and that this golden age will devolve into silver. Moreover, in Milton's temporary golden age, the worlds of soft pastoral and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* meet, as an underlying rape and lustful seduction manifest in the seemingly peaceful setting and its passionate activities.[302] Milton's mythmaking in this poem, in addition to his attention to Phoebus, Philomela, Sylvanus, and Aurora, recalls the love and adultery of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which Milton subtly invokes when remarking how "Ceres and her mother Cybele are hardly safe" (126). As much as we would like this poem to be Milton's diversion from chastity to desire or to ride along with Milton in the wandering clouds, the poem is haunted by Milton's self-division and his reluctant severance from springtime and its *otium*.

[301] Shawcross suggests as much as well but since his work most scholarship takes the poem innocently. See Shawcross, "Form and Content," 346.
[302] Martz, *The Poet of Exile*, 229.

Although most scholars have viewed "*Elegia Quinta*" and "*Elegia Sexta*" at odds, the subtle restraint of the former becomes overt restraint in the latter. In this poem, Milton endorses chastity as a source of creativity,[303] recalling Milton's flight from love in "*Elegia Prima*" and his exilic model in "*Elegia Quarta*." In this poem, Milton writes once more to Charles Diodati, who implicitly has complained that "the banquet and the feast have frightened poetry away." Milton describes how wine with such "*delicias*" and "*gaudia*" (11) has inspired many writers of light poetry and then shifts to how water for a poet with a "*sobria*" and "*castus*" youth (62-3) inspires serious and divine poetry. Milton, who opens the poem by remarking on his empty stomach, aligns himself with the sober and chaste youths, which he supports by revealing his composition of his "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." Most scholars have seen this poem as Milton's choice of epic over elegy or Virgilian chastity over Ovidian holiday,[304] but these arguments reduce the poem to a debate over genre and author. Anthony Low captures Milton's conflict more accurately, noting that although Milton does temporarily assume the epic-elegy polemic, "the kind of poetry that Milton rather obliquely describes in the second part [of the poem] is not confined to the epic."[305] Low asserts that the category also includes divine poetry, such as Milton's "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," but we also ought to include philosophy and prophecy as well.[306] Likewise, the type of poetry described in the first part of the poem is not restricted to elegy but also includes the works of Pindar,

[303] Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis*, 145-6.
[304] For *Elegia Sexta* as an epic-elegy polemic, see Martz, *The Poet of Exile*, 23, 52 and Revard, *Milton and the Tangles*, 9, 121, 126. Revard, notably finds in this poem Milton's acceptance of both genres. For *Elegia Sexta* as a debate over Virgilian Chastity and Ovidian Holiday see Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis*, 145-6.
[305] Anthony Low, "The Unity of Milton's *Elegia Sexta*," *English Literary Renaissance* 11, no. 2 (1981): 213-223, 218.
[306] Milton, for example, cites Pythagoras and Tiresias here.

Anacreon, and Horace, whose verse echoes throughout this elegy.[307] Milton is describing two types of poetry which, to him, are connected to types of life, as in "*L'Allegro*" and "*Il Penseroso*."[308] Whereas the poet of *levitas* "can have a free and easy life of flowers, banquets, and wine," the poet of *gravitas* "must control his natural appetites through temperance and chastity" to eventually achieve "a supernatural vision."[309] Milton, as seen in the last 5 elegies, is one of the latter type. Although he does not condemn the poetry of wine and delight, he does still restrain and separate himself from them, from *delicias* like those of London in "*Elegia Prima*" and *gaudia*. Ironically, he is like Ovid, who "sent deficient songs [his *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*] from the Coralli's fields, where there were not enough vines or victuals" (19-20). Milton draws a difference between himself and his Ovidian model in this elegy. Whereas Ovid's exilic songs are "deficient" for being deprived of this leisure, Milton's self-imposed exile prepares him for something greater.

When read in relation to the preceding poems, "*Elegia Septima*," the final poem of the collection, provides a powerful conclusion that simultaneously confesses his failure at this exile and moralizes it. This poem and the retraction that follows are the greatest mysteries of the elegiac *liber* and, perhaps, the clearest signs of Milton's collection for effect. Scholars frequently note that the heading for "*Elegia Septima*," which puts the

[307] Cf., ll 27-28 and *Odes* I.9.7-8; l. 31 and *Odes* I.1.19. He invokes Horace to contradict him in l. 71. Cf., *Epist*. I.19.1-6.
[308] Indeed, Diodati has drawn forth Milton's muse who, like in "*Il Penseroso*," desires solitary darkness [*tenebras*] and empty stomach [*non pleno ventre*]. Milton in "Il Penseroso" desires solitary settings, such as "some still removed place … / Where glowing embers through the room / Teach light to counterfeit a gloom" (78-80). Likewise, he views "Spare Fast who oft with gods doth diet" as company to Melancholy (46).
[309] Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis*, 145-6.

elegy in Milton's 19th year, disrupts the otherwise chronological order of the elegies,[310] and despite being the last poem in the collection, this elegy is the most conventional opening poem, featuring the first day of spring and Cupid's conquering of the poet. Maggie Kilgour describes it as a "dizzying backslide into Ovidian poetry."[311] Likewise, the epigraph, which condemns Milton's "*vana trophaea*" or empty memorials (2), is frequently described as a "puzzle" for its vague antecedent. Its condemnation of "*haec nequitiae*," "these trifles" (1-2), can only sensibly refer to the preceding lines of verse in "*Elegia Septima*," for the rest of the collection, with perhaps the exception of "*Elegia Quinta*" are extremely chaste. These poems remind us that the elegies are titled "*Elegiarum Liber Primus*," which is to say that Milton has likely selected and reorganized the preceding elegies from more than one book or source. But paired together and placed at the end of the collection, the poems present first a humanizing confession of failure and second a re-assertion of his final (and permanent) exile.

Whereas the last 6 elegies depict Milton's exile, his *Tristian* model, temptation, and temperance, "*Elegia Septima*" depicts a retrospective narrative of his failure. This failure seems all the more real, not just in its disruption of the *persona* negotiated heretofore but also in, perhaps, our hopes as readers to see the lover behind the exile poet, to hear a confession. Milton consistently creates "cross-comparisons" with the *Tristia* in his elegies but his movement from exile to lover is perhaps his best "cross-comparison"

[310] That the elegies are in chronological order besides "*Elegia Septima*," I think, is coincidence. In fact, one could not tell otherwise, had the publisher Moseley not encouraged Milton to include his age (at least, in accordance with Dobranski's claim). On Moseley's influence on Milton's self-presentation in the *Poems*, see Stephen Dobranski, *Milton, Authorship, and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82-103.

[311] Kilgour, *Milton and the Metamorphosis*, 146.

of the collection. Part of this reverse narrative makes the poem all the more believable, and thus so many critics understand it autobiographically. At the same time, however, there is a competing critical history that emphasizes the poem's obvious artifice and conventionality. These contradictory strands result from what Low identifies as Milton's ability to see love "both from the inside—as something supremely momentous—and from the outside—as something trivial, foolish, even blasphemous."[312] In that we retrospectively and simultaneously get his sentimental experience and near-critical concern, the poem resembles confession. I suggested earlier in "*Elegia Prima*" that we hear echoes of Carthage in Augustine's *Confessions* and here, in the parallel elegy, they emerge once more.[313] When Milton has finally been stricken by love, we spot a glimmer of adolescent experience in Milton's irresolution. "Pray, take away my madness," he orders Cupid but then he hesitates, "yet, do not take it away. I know not why, but every lover is delightfully distraught" (99-100). This line, wherein he paradoxically embraces the wretchedness of unrequited love and marvels at his contradiction, is perhaps the most appreciated of the poem in its sentiment; however, other lines merit attention for communicating one of elegy's dominant themes: the ambivalence of love. Upon his beloved's departure, Milton compares his grief to that of Hephaestus who grieved for "a

[312] Anthony Low, "*Elegia Septima*: The Poet and the Poem," *Milton Studies* 19 (1984): 21-35, esp. 33. See also Brian Striar, "Milton's *Elegia Septima*: The Poetics of Roman Elegy and a Verse Translation," *Milton Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1993): 131-8. Striar also finds this "contradictory voice" in the poem but attributes it to the combined influence of Propertius, Ovid, and Tibullus.

[313] As Edward Le Comte says, "the poem is about disobedience to divine law, punishment, repentance, and supplication." See Comte, "Miltonic Echoes in *Elegia VII*," *English Literary Renaissance* 14, no. 2 (1984): 191-198, especially 191. However, it is also, as Low claims, a recognition of his own error. See also Stephen Fallon's remarks below which compare the combination of "*Elegia Septima*" and the retraction with Augustine's *Confessions*. On the poem's temporality, see John Garrison, "*Elegia Septima* and Milton's Erotic Temporalities," *Exemplaria* 27 no. 3 (2015): 242-261. Garrison examines the poem through recent work on queer temporality and draws attention to the poem's position in the collection, chronology, and its retrospection.

heaven lost [*ammissum … caelum*], having been cast headlong among the fires of Lemnos" and then to Amphiaraus who "looked back upon the stolen sun as he was carried down to Orcus by thundering horses" (81-4). Milton simultaneously elevates his experience to that of deprivation from heaven and from earth, an "*amissum caelum*" or "paradise lost" which we might admire at the same time that we raise an eyebrow at its "discrepancy."[314] We can understand how tremendous such a loss might feel to an adolescent first experiencing love at the same time that we recognize a sort of mock-epic style, echoing Cupid's heroic description of himself (with another double simile) earlier in the poem.

This same feeling emerges in relation to the collection's persona as we know him so far. If this poem, which begins with Milton's scorn for Cupid, will end as we might expect based on convention, the reader will be preparing for an immense irony in the revelation of the poet's hubris. However, if the speaker is cautious, as he was in the parallel "*Elegia Prima*," he may escape once more while the blind boy's indulgence permits. Instead, the result is a greater irony as the poet fails to follow his own example. After all, he is sluggish to rise on the May morning, woken instead by an "*impiger*" Cupid (17), and when he walks among a mob of girls like goddesses he admits he is "*non … severus*" (57). As Anthony Low asks, pointing toward the speaker's "solipsistic blindness" and extreme repetition of "*mihi*," "Can we think … that this *mihi* who is speaking is John Milton?"[315] Yet, some sentiment or reality draws us back: in this case, Milton's experience of self-division. His beloved has been born away ["*ablata*"], never to

[314] In this line, Le Comte finds an anticipation of Milton's epic. See Le Comte, "Miltonic Echoes," 191. On the "discrepancy" between experience and reality in these lines, see Low, "*Elegia Septima*," 31.
[315] Low, "*Elegia Septima*," 33.

return, and thus Milton feels torn asunder, "*findor*" (76, 79). "*Haec remanet, sequitur pars altera votum,*" he remarks, "this part remains; the other pursues its pledge." These words echo once more the experience of the exile, whose body remains "here" while the soul lingers back "home." In particular, Milton's turn from exile to lover reverses Ovid's *Tristian* figuration of Rome as his mistress, while he is in exile himself. Over the elegiac collection, Milton has reversed Ovid's life trajectory, going from self-imposed exile to poet-lover; an *error* in restraint has led to Milton's love just as an *error* advanced Ovid's exile. Appropriately, Milton places this reverse trajectory into perspective in "*Elegia Septima,*" a poem that is a conventional opening for an elegiac book, mirrors his own opening poem "*Elegia Prima,*" and concludes his collection. Milton leaves his readers with a poem that realistically translates his experience while, through its artifice, acknowledges its shame. Rather than for proximity to the apologizing epigraph, Milton places "*Elegia Septima*" at the end of the collection as a humanizing and moralizing conclusion of a trajectory.

Milton follows "*Elegia Septima*" with his apologetic epigraph to complete an exilic image. He has selected and re-organized a series of elegies to present a young Milton tempted by yet restrained from the idle leisure of love and youth, until the final poem which confesses his failure. His epigraph, separated by a thin rule from this elegy, comments on the preceding content:

> *Haec ego mente olim laeva, studioque supino,*
> *Nequitiae posui vana trophaea meae.*
> *Scilicet abreptum sic me malus impulit error,*
> *Indocilisque aetas prava magistra fuit.*
> *Donec Socraticos umbrosa Academia rivos*
> *Praebuit, admissum dedocuitque iugum.*
> *Protinus extinctis ex illo tempore flammis,*

Cicta rigent multo pectora nostra gelu;
Unde suis frigus metuit puer ipse sagittis,
Et Diomedeam vim timet ipsa Venus.

> These trifles are the empty monuments of my idleness that I set down, at one time, with silly reason and negligent fire. Certainly, evil error drove me astray; my ignorant age proved a savage teacher. At length the shady Academy supplied its Socratic streams and taught me not to suffer my yoke. From that moment on, when the flames were extinguished, my breast, covered with a great deal of frost, hardened. For this reason, the boy himself now fears for his arrows, and even Venus shudders at my Diomedean strength.

Many authors of elegy or who published *juvenilia* include an epigraph of disclaimer, and in his Milton affirms his intent expressed in "*Elegia Prima*" to separate himself from such "*error*." After "*Elegia Septima*," the epitaph is, as Stephen Fallon remarks, "something like the plot of Puritan conversion narrative," "an apparently straightforward confession of youthful error, followed by the resolve of conversion."[316] Milton emphatically extinguishes the flames of his passion, unlearns ("*dedocuit*") the yoke to which he had submitted, and encases his heart with rigid frost. Both Cupid and Venus, he asserts, remain far away in fear of him. Time and education now separate him from that "*indocilis aetas*." But what does this retraction actually announce? Revard asks, "is the retraction a rejection of love or of a certain kind of love poetry?"[317] The answer to this, I think, reflects Milton's project with pastoral, in which he relinquishes not the genre or its subject but, rather, its idle *otium*. Milton's "*nequitiae vana trophaea … meae*" is vague. These "memorials" are *vana*: empty, fruitless, or pointless. They are reminders of his *nequitiae*, a word that can denote wantonness but, in relation to the *umbrosa Academia*

[316] Fallon, *Milton's Peculiar Grace,* 78. Fallon's book about Milton's self-representation notes the peculiarity of Milton's tendency to write himself into the text without ever writing a confession or conversion narrative. He argues that Milton presents himself as "untouched by human frailty" (ix) and sees this passage as exception for its confessional retrospection.
[317] Revard, *Milton and the Tangles,* 41.

that remedy it, seems more likely to refer to his fruitless leisure in opposition to studious retirement. The elegists employ the word variously—they embrace it alongside *otium*—but Milton here seems to refer, as Propertius does in *Prop*. 1.6, to his choice of *otium* over *officium*. The fact that the preceding elegies, with the exception of "*Elegia Septima*," do not profess love and prefer sober study suggest, perhaps, that Milton has selected and re-organized the elegies for this reason. However, it also reminds readers just how chaste Milton's elegies have actually been.

The 1645 *Poems* provides many fragmented images of Milton in various genres, on diverse subjects, and at different ages. Many declare a poetic vocation, but the declaration is fractured along lines of language, location, self, and, most of all, time, as Milton reluctantly straddles attitudes toward his hours spent in youthful *otium*. Milton attempts to unify these fragments within the collection, fashioning in his elegies an image of an exile around his self-contradictions. Milton's elegiac book juxtaposes scenes of exile, temptation, and failure, ending finally with the renunciation of his vain sporting. Throughout the book, we find alienation from his *patria* in both "*Elegia Prima*" and "*Elegia Quarta*." Moreover, he confronts a divided self in which his body remains in one place while his soul travels with Young in "*Elegia Quarta*" and his beloved in "*Elegia Septima*." From afar, he watches spring activities and youthful leisure in "*Elegia Prima*" and "*Elegia Quinta*," refraining from participating in both. In "*Elegia Sexta*," Milton declares this restraint will lead to a higher vision and admits that, while he writes elegy and other genres, that epic and divine poetry is his final goal. At some point Milton fails in his restraint and reflects on his failure marvelously from both inner and outer perspectives as a momentous and trivial occasion. Milton, furthermore, constructs

himself through “cross-comparisons” with Ovid, reversals on his *Tristia* 1.1, 3.7, and Ovid’s life story. He transitions from a self-imposed exile to an elegiac lover who immediately retracts this role. The Milton created by the selection and reorganization of these poems is a poet in self-imposed banishment from idle *otium* as it relates to elegy, pastoral, love, and youth. He removes himself from London, from spring, from love and love elegy, and then, like an exile looking toward his *patria*, imagines or spectates from the outside. Through this *persona*, Milton makes sense of the rest of the *Poems*: his shifts between *levitas* and *gravitas*, his reluctance to relinquish the world of “*L’Allegro*” for “*Il Penseroso*,” his hesitation to dismiss elegy and pastoral, and his anticipation of epic and divine poetry. Young Milton, as we see him pieced together in the 1645 *Poems* and in the *Elegiarum Liber*, is restraining himself from the *otium* of youth, often reluctant and occasionally failing, holding out for a higher and greater vision.

The vision of Milton that the *Elegiarum Liber* provides ultimately colors the other English and Latin poems that surround the elegiac book. Perhaps most interesting are poems like “Lycidas,” which were previously published and initially garnered attention for Milton. How does Milton reconceive of “Lycidas” and its purpose within the second publication? And how would readers (re)read the work in its new context? Perhaps the reader finds not only Milton’s relinquishment of “sport” with Amaryllis in the shade or the tangles of Neaera’s hair “to scorn delights and live laborious days” but also a sympathy in the uncouth swain for the loss of youth, Lycidas’ death “ere his prime,” and leaves shattered “before the mellowing year.” Carrithers, reading the English series of *Poems*, finds this sympathy in “Lycidas,” remarking “that he and Lycidas were creatures of history — of the same culture, apprenticeship, and mentorship — renders the loss

more poignantly as a loss of self."[318] The funeral poem mourns the death of "a learned friend" and perhaps a dissolution of a golden age as well as Milton's departure from pastoral and youth. Yet, it also mourns the premature nature of these departures. The shepherds find consolation in Lycidas' afterlife but a sad undertone now courses beneath the swain's "eager thought" and "warbling." The swain remains from morning until evening. The sun "dropt," and the swain "rose" to prepare for "fresh woods" and "pastures new." However, his departure has been forced by "bitter constraint" and "sad occasion dear." Milton's elegies and his poems of exile make his departure, in these lines, from pastoral, from youth, from play more reluctant and premature, though still certainly self-imposed.

[318] Carrithers, "*Poems* (1645): On Growing Up," 176.

Conclusion

The Roman elegists' attempts to transform their genre around subjectivity lingers in these works by William Shakespeare, John Donne, and John Milton. As Gallus, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid face crises of identity under Augustus in a imperial Rome, reflecting wistfully on the severed values of the republic, they make elegy into a genre of short, discrete poems with a foregrounded subjective perspective. They marginalize the mythological and historical narrative elements to expand the poet's voice of the framing and linking passages, while positioning the genre in opposition to the narrative mode and national concerns of epic. Elegy's personal subject matter and its exploration of selfhood is what made it so tempting for early modern educators and curricula writers to place it as the initiating genre for oratory. Thus, in the Renaissance it modelled how to create characters and to fashion a voice for epistles. Furthermore, it captured the interests of young men with its amatory topics and showed how students could present themselves and their life, much as Ovid had done in Rome. The very movement that revived elegy, too, was one that perpetuated an identity crisis similar to that in the Rome of the elegists. Early modern students and writers reflected upon Rome as a model for a new age but, in doing so, they sought an unachievable goal that was incommensurate with their own experiences and self-conceptions. The imitation of Roman elegy was part of this conflict but it was also a way to work through it.

Facing this crisis, Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton turn to elegy in a way similar to the Romans. In *The Two Gents,* Shakespeare takes elegy's and Ovid's process of self-presentation as his subject matter, questioning the *Tristia* as a moral alternative to the *Amores* (as is declared in curricula) and revealing above all elegy's problematic treatment

of women. Around the same time, Donne finds himself in a conflict at the Inns of Court, both relying on and spurning court. Elegy becomes his means for presenting his paradoxical feelings and interrogating the possibility of a unified selfhood with conflicting feelings. Finally, in his 1645 *Poems*, Milton uses elegy to make sense of his various instantions of self as they are presented in his lyric poems. Milton rearranges and edits his *Elegiarum Liber*, a book within the larger book, to make sense of his conflicting attitudes toward leisure and duty. He presents himself as a self-imposed exile, divided in his interests and devotion. Ultimately, these poems also provide insight into these authors' self-conceptions early in their career. Shakespeare's *Two Gents* reveals his growing disinterest in Ovid as a model for poetic career and selfhood; Donne's elegies show how his reputation as a sincere poet has its origins in elegy and identity conflict; and Milton's elegies reveal his revisionist project, his attempt to redeem his youthful poetry and his desire to retroactively withdraw himself from the temptations of love and play.

My chapters on these works should also show how significant elegy proves in early modern English culture in education and self-presentation, a significance obscured by an intense focus on epic poetry in studies of classical reception. This overzealousness for epic has its own analogy in Rome, when and where there was an influx of epic poems under Augustus. In response, the elegists recused themselves from writing the superior genre to focus on themselves and their loves, asserting the value of their short and supposedly worthless poems. In early modern England, the focus of scholarship on epic as the culminating genre in an author's career, as the culminating genre in grammar school education, and as the preeminent form of nationhood neglects elegy as the

initiating genre in an author's career, as the initiating genre in grammar school education, and as the preeminent form of selfhood. Before writers sought to constitute or interrogate ideas of their nation or empire, elegy was a way for them to constitute and interrogate ideas of the self.

In the end, this project has always been interested in value: in the value that Augustan Romans attribute to elegy in contrast with epic, in the value that modern scholars attribute to elegy in contrast with epic. I opened this dissertation with a discussion of *nequitia*—of elegy's worthlessness, among other things—and the Roman elegists' ironic use of the term to define the genre. My goal has been to reassess this value, especially in early modern England, which has received so little scholarly attention in relation to the genre. Contrary to common belief, English imitations of this genre are not rare. Donne, although he is the most famous, is not the only nor the first English elegist; Christopher Marlowe is not the only translator of love elegies in the period; and Milton is not the only writer of neo-Latin elegies. It is no coincidence that elegy plays an initial role in the careers of these 3 major writers, and as we have seen, it also is central to understanding Shakespeare's Ovidian career. Elegy is the genre that these authors choose at the start of their careers (poetic and otherwise) for constituting and interrogating selfhood, and recognition of this opens new channels for new investigations, including Marlowe's self-conception at Cambridge, Ben Jonson's understanding of himself as a poet/dramatist, and (especially) the self-presentation of contemporary women writers, such as Lady Mary Wroth and Aemilia Lanyer. These other major figures also found value in elegy's facility for self-presentation and transformation—the powers of Proteus and Vertumnus—, and their use of elegy as they assume roles in the development of

English literature, literary careers, patronage, and female authorship merits further investigation.

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Appendix: Elegy's Reception From Augustan Rome to Early Modern England

Following the Augustan period, elegy becomes rare. "There is plenty of love poetry, and there is plenty of poetry in the elegiac metre," as Roger P. H. Green notes, "but love elegy is notably scarce."[319] One of the more recognizable examples from this period is the famous *Pervigilium Veneris*: a poem concerned primarily with love yet written in another meter. Even references to Roman love elegy are few and far between, and many of the allusions identified by modern scholars appear tenuous at best. The most convincing categorically "elegiac" work from this period is one by Maximianus, likely written during the mid-sixth century.[320] It is so convincing that readers and editors into the early modern period consider it to be the work of Gallus, which is somewhat understandable since one of its mistresses is ostensibly named after Gallus' Lycoris.[321] In medieval Europe, Ovid's later elegies generally experience greater popularity than love elegy, which had a more "volatile moral meaning";[322] however, Ovid's *Amores* begin to appear as poetic models at this time as well.[323] One can find traces of Roman elegy, although slight, as early as the Carolingian Renaissance. Quotations of the elegists are supplied (infrequently) as grammatical examples, but the elegies of Tibullus appear in a famous elenchus produced during the period. There is considerably greater evidence for

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[319] Roger P. H. Green, "Latin love elegy in Late Antiquity," *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, 257-270, especially 257.

[320] For more information on Maximianus' poetry and its relationship to elegy see Green, "Latin love elegy in Late Antiquity." See also, Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence*, 53-56.

[321] The work is 686 lines long and is generally divided into five elegies and an epilogue, the first of which laments old age and the rest of which focus on a particular woman (Lycoris, Aquilina, Candida, and a *Graea puella*). Yet, the dating of the poem is fairly uncertain, unless one can take the poet's acquaintance "Boethius" as the historical Boethius and the poet's contemporary.

[322] John M. Fyler, "The Medieval Ovid," *A Companion to Ovid*, ed. Peter E. Knox (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 412.

[323] See Marek Thue Kretschmer, "The love elegy in medieval Latin literature (pseudo-Ovidiana and Ovidian imitations)," *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, 271-289.

the reception of the Roman elegists in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France (the *Aetas Ovidiana* as designated by Ludwig Traube),[324] especially in the Loire Valley. The epistolary poem especially flourishes during this time, and poems such as the eleventh-century *Deidamia Achilli* and four of Baudri of Bourgueil's poems take Ovid's *Heroides* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto* as models. In regard to love elegy, one can find what Simona Gavinelli calls "verbal revival" of Propertius in the works of John of Salisbury and later a manuscript of Propertius transcribed for Richard de Fournival. De Fournival would go on to reference the author in several of his works and even may have write a poem under Ovid's name called *De vetula*. Nine poems by Marbod of Rennes are written in an Ovidian manner with several allusions and references. To this list we also might add an epistolary poem reminiscent of Ovid's *Amores* and *Prop*. 1.2 by Godfrey of Reims. Serlo of Wilton, like Marbod, imitates and alludes to the *Amores* overtly. He even presents himself as devoted to love more than both Gallus and Ovid. To this long list we might finally add the Troubadours Guillaume IX, the Ripoll poet, and Bernart de Ventadorn. In his book *Harmful Eloquence*, Michael Stapleton makes the case that these authors were influenced by Ovid's *Amores*. Literary "parallels," as Stapleton notes, "seem excruciatingly inexact,"[325] but his claim that the personae of the speakers in these poems are very Ovidian is difficult to deny.

In Italy, one begins to see new traces of the Roman elegists in Padua as early as the thirteenth century, and by the fifteenth century there would be a wide knowledge of

[324] Ludwig Traube, *Einleitung in die laeteinische Philologie des Mittelalters*, ed. P. Lehmann (München: C.H. Beck, 1911), 113
[325] Stapleton, *Harmful Eloquence*, 71.

the tradition.[326] Perhaps unsurprisingly, Petrarch initiated the greatest revival of the Roman elegists.[327] After discovering de Fournival's manuscript of Propertius in 1333, Petrarch copies and annotates the work, going on to reference the elegists as a group in several works such as the *De remediis utriusque fortunae* and *Triumphis cupidinis*. The most obvious influence of the Roman elegists appears in his *Canzoniere*: a collection of poems from the perspective of a lover-poet about his love for a *donna*. The influence of both Propertius and Ovid show up in allusions throughout the collection, and by the time that Petrarch's *Canzoniere* gain great popularity throughout Europe, Petrarchistic sonnets and subsequent traditions prove to be a concern with which imitators of love elegy would have to reckon. In Florence and elsewhere during the fifteenth century, the reviving popularity of the Roman love elegists and Petrarch's newly popular *Canzoniere* inspired close imitations in neo-Latin elegies.[328] The list of authors is extensive, including Cristoforo Landino, Alessandro Braccesi, and Angelo Poliziano; at the court of the Este, Tito Vespasiono Strozzi and Basinio da Parma; and in Siena Giovanni Marrasio, Enea Silvio Piccolomini (future Pope Pius II), and Giovannantonio Campano. Notable among these is Giovanni Pontano, who is responsible for the revival of the Roman elegists at the Aragon court in Naples. He, too, imitates the elegists, references them in his prose, and transcribes several Propertian manuscripts.

[326] For surveys regarding Propertius' reception during this period, see Dolla, "Echi Properziani"; Antonio la Penna, *Properzio*, 254-261; Simona Gavinelli, "Reception of Propertius in Late Antiquity and Neolatin and Renaissance Literature."
[327] See Chapter 3 in this dissertation. See also, For Propertius' influence on Petrarch, see Jennifer Petrie, *Petrarch*, 139-144; Caputo, "Petrarcha and Properzio."
[328] See "2.5.1 Elegiac Poetry," in *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies, Part II: Literary, Linguistic, Philological and Editorial Questions*, ed. Jozef Ijsewijn and Dirk Sacré (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1998). See also Luke B. T. Houghton, "Renaissance Latin love elegy."

Outside of Italy, the most notable author to follow the Italian humanists is Johannes Secundus, a Dutch poet of the sixteenth century. Although Secundus lived a very brief life, he wrote the most popular neo-Latin poetry during the period. He is most famous for his Catullan *Basia* but also wrote several books of elegies, primarily about his beloved Julia and later Neaera.[329] In France, Théodore de Bèze and Joachim Du Bellay would become two of the more influential poets writing neo-Latin love elegy, though we may also find elegies in the works of Clément Marot, Charles de Sainte-Marthe, and Charles Fontaine. Du Bellay, for example, writes eight elegies in close imitation of the genre and his more famous collection, the *Amores*, combines a variety of meters, though most are still in elegiac couplets and include elegiac content.

England stands out in the reception of Roman elegy for its more numerous imitations of elegy in the vernacular.[330] As far as English "love elegy" is concerned, an anonymous Latin-English edition of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* appears to be the first translation of Ovid's works in early modern England. Otherwise, Catullus is translated early in the period, along with two neo-Latin elegies of Théodore de Bèze. Imitation flourishes in the 1590's, coinciding with the sonnet vogue. Several of the sonnet sequences from the period include ostensible echoes of the elegists, and elegies by Barnabe Barnes, Giles Fletcher, and Thomas Lodge were even included alongside their sonnet sequences. Barnes composes the largest collection of the three authors

[329]See Paul Murgatroyd, *The Amatory Elegies of Johannes Secundus*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 28 (Amsterdam: Brill, 2000).
[330] Sources for translations of these works include the invaluable Robert Cummings and Stuart Gillespie, "Translations from Greek and Latin Classics 1550-1700: A Revised Bibliography," *Translation and Literature* 18 (2009); Gillespie and Cummings, "A Bibliography of Ovidian Translations and Imitations in English," *Translation and Literature* 13 (2004).

(*Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, 1593) and positions it after a sonnet sequence and alongside many "odes pastorall," exploring the generic boundaries and conventions of love. These works may have been inspired in part by early circulation of Christopher Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores*, a work that would provide a precedent for later early modern elegists but also a new way to engage with love poetry.[331] The work is especially important as it was the first complete translation of an elegiac corpus in English and provided the iambic pentameter couplet as the conventional meter for elegiac composition.

In particular, Marlowe's translation was important for the genesis of the love poetry of John Donne and Ben Jonson.[332] Jonson himself engages with Marlowe's translation of the *Amores* in his *Poetaster*, a play which features Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid as main characters. Jonson goes on to write his own elegies, perhaps as an alternative to Petrarchan lyric, though he straddles the boundaries closely. Donne too is interested in the genre's connection to the Petrarchan lyric, though he does not reject the latter through elegy so severely as Thomas Nash does in his "The Choise of Valentines." Eventually, Donne's elegies became quite popular among his contemporaries. Besides Marlowe's translation, Donne was also influenced by the elegies of Thomas Campion, who declared himself the first English elegist in the early 1590s and translated one of Propertius' elegies. Unlike the previously listed authors, Campion composed neo-Latin

[331] Heather James, "The Poet's Toys: Christopher Marlowe and the Liberties of Erotic Elegy," *MLQ* March (2006), 103-127.

[332] Despite the fact that there is no extant evidence of Donne's ownership or reading of Marlowe's elegies, many critics are convinced of his knowledge of the Marlovian precedent, including Helen Gardner and Geoffrey Bullough. Such a claim is sensible when one considers Donne's obvious preference for the elegies of Ovid and his fidelity toward the iambic pentameter couplet. Regardless, Marlowe's translation paved a path for Donne

elegies during this period, eventually published by Richard Field in 1595. This contrast draws attention to the relative dearth of other neo-Latin elegies in England compared to the continent. The Scottish author George Buchanan had written elegies at this time but neo-Latin elegies in England are relatively few. John Milton is the notable exception in this regard. All of his elegies are in Latin but vary greatly from love elegy to funeral elegies in elegiac couplets.

Whereas the *Amores* enter the Elizabethan period through its affinity to the sonnet, the furtive reading of students, and the homosocial environments of the Inns of Court and university, Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia* are received primarily through the grammar school system. The *Heroides* and *Tristia* appear around the same time in well-received translations, respectively George Tuberville (1567) and Thomas Churchyard (1572). Michael Drayton is the most notable imitator of the *Heroides* and adapts these poems for figures from English history. Notable imitations are Samuel Daniel's "heroic epistle" from Cleopatra to Antony and John Donne's "Sappho to Philaenis." Imitations of the exile poetry are done best by Milton, whose *Elegiarum Liber* adapts them extensively. Here and elsewhere (as I show in the Introduction and Chapter 4) the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* are adapted and imitated for love themes as well. Their influence on exile literature more broadly, during this period, is immense.